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THE WORKS

OF

JEREMY TAYLOR, D.D.

VOL. III.

THE WORKS

OF

JEREMY TAYLOR, D.D.

WITH

SOME ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE,

SUMMARY OF EACH DISCOURSE, NOTES, &c.

BY THE REV. T. S. HUGHES, B.D.

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SUMMARY OF SERMON VIII.

JUDE,—VERSES 22, 23.

PART I.

MAN has but one entrance into the world, but a thousand exits. And as in the natural, so it is in the spiritual state: nothing but the union of faith and obedience can secure our regeneration; but there are a thousand passages turning to darkness. There are various stages and descents to death, as there are degrees of torment in the kingdom of sorrow: yet for every one of these stages of sin, God hath measured out a proportion of mercy. *If sin abounds, grace shall much more abound.* Yet there are some sins for which God hath not appointed a remedy: some men have sinned like the fallen angels, and have outrun the conditions of grace. This is a state to be avoided with all care and anxiety. The aim of this discourse stated:—to remonstrate on the several states of sin and death, and to show the remedies which God hath proportioned for them; that we may observe the evils of the least, and so avoid the intolerable mischiefs of the greater; lest we fall into such sins as the eternal God will never pardon.

I. *Of some have compassion.* These reduced to four heads or orders of men and actions: all which have their proportional remedies.

1. The first are those that sin without observation of their peculiar state; either because they are uninstructed in the special cases of conscience, or because they do an evil against which there is no express commandment. Millions are in a state of sickness and danger, who are made to believe that they are in perfect health; and they do actions concerning which they never made a question whether they were just or not, nor were ever taught by what names to call them: this explained. Others sin, because the crime is not under the restraint of an express commandment, and there is no letter of the law to condemn them by an express sentence: this enlarged on. 2. Men sin without an express prohibition, when they commit a thing that is like to a forbidden evil. When St. Paul had reckoned many works of the flesh, he adds, *and such like;* that is, all that have the same unreasonableness and carnality: this explained. 3. A man is guilty, even when no law names his action, if he does any thing that is a cause or an effect, a part or unhandsome adjunct, of a forbidden instance: this explained. 4. Besides the express laws of our religion, there is a universal line and limit to our passions and designs, which is called *the analogy of Christianity*, that is, the proportion of its sanctity, and the strictness of its holy precepts. This is not forbidden; but does it become you? Is it decent in a Christian to live in plenty and ease, and heap up money, and never to partake of Christ's passions? this subject dilated on. It is but reasonable that we should take account of our lives by the proportions, as well as by the express rules of our religion; for that which in the accounts of men is called reputation and public honesty, is the same which in religion we call analogy and proportion: this point enlarged on.

II. The next sort of those who are in the state of sin, and yet to be handled gently and with compassion, are those who entertain themselves with the beginnings and little entrances of sin: this point enlarged on: the compassion to be used to such

persons is the compassion of a severe tutor or of a physician. Chastise thy infant sin by discipline and acts of virtue. He that means to be temperate, and to avoid the crime and dishonor of drunkenness, must not love to partake of the songs, or bear a part in the foolish scenes of laughter which distract wisdom, and fright her from the company. Danger of admitting the first entrances of sin described, and illustrated by a beautiful simile.

III. There are some who are very much to be pitied and assisted, because they are going into hell, and, as matters stand with them, they cannot, or they think they cannot, avoid it. There are persons whose life is wholly in dependence on the will of others; and if the prince or patron be vicious and imperious, it is the loss of his dependent's fortune not to lose his soul: state of such persons enlarged on. So also it is when ignorant people are catechised into false doctrine, and know nothing but such principles as weaken the nerves and enfeeble the joints of holy living; they never heard of any other. State of those considered who follow great and evil examples, who are engaged in the public sins of a kingdom, which they understand not, and either must venture to be undone on the strength of their own little reasonings, or else must go where the popular misery has made the way plain before their eyes, though it be uneven and dangerous to their consciences. Many, if they be left alone, out of the sight of their tempter, go whither their education or custom carries them: but it is not in some natures to deny the face of a man and the boldness of a sinner, especially when it is not their interest to do so. These men are in a pitiable condition, and are to be helped by the following rules:—

1. Let every man consider that he has two relations to serve, and he stands between God and his master, or his nearest relative: in such cases it comes to be disputed, which interest is to

be preferred; which of the persons is to be displeased, God or his master, God or his prince, God or his friend. If we be servants of the man, let us remember that we are also servants of God: this topic enlarged on.

2. The next advice to persons thus tempted is, that they should learn to separate duty from mistaken interest: let them both be served in their just proportions, when we have learned to make a difference. Take the counsel of the son of Sirach: 'Accept no person against thy soul, and let not the reverence of any man cause thee to fall.'

3. When passion mingles with duty, and is a necessary instrument of serving God, let not passion run its own course, and pass on to liberty, and thence to license and dissoluteness: this explained.

4. Let every such-tempted person remember, that all evil comes from ourselves, and not from others; and therefore all pretences and prejudices, all commands and temptations, all opinions and necessities, are but instances of our weakness, and arguments of our folly: for unless we listed, no man could make us drink beyond our measures; and if I tell a lie for the advantage of my master or my friend, it is because I prefer a little money or flattery before my honor and innocence: this topic dilated on to the end.

PART II.

IV. The last sort of those that sin, and yet are to be treated with compassion, is of them that interrupt the course of an honest life with single acts of sin; whose resolution stands fair, and whose hearts sojourn in religion, or rather dwell there; though, like evil husbands, they go abroad and enter into places of dishonor and unthriftiness. Such as these all histories remember with a sad character: instance of David. God has given

as precepts of such holiness and purity, meekness and humility, as have no pattern but Christ, no precedent but his own purity: and therefore it is intended that we should not live a life whose actions are chequered with white and black, half sin and half virtue. It is not meant by this that a man's life must be as pure as the sun: but it may be like the moon, in which there are spots, but they are no deformity; a lessening only and an abatement of light: this enlarged on. The danger of allowing ourselves to enter on the confines of vice, to see the beauties, as it were, of the enemy's country, described: comparison of Dinah, Jacob's daughter. When men thus fall, not by design, but by folly; not by malice, but by surprise; not by the strength of the will, but by the weakness of grace; they are to be treated with great compassion, and to be assisted by the following considerations and exercises:—

1. First, we should consider, that for a good man to be overtaken in a single crime, is the greatest dishonor and unthriftiness in the world. 'As a fly in a box of ointment, so is a little folly to him who is accounted wise.' Evil of this dilated on. Every crime committed interrupts the acceptation of grace, and makes the man to enter into a state of enmity with God. Sins once pardoned return again to all the purposes of mischief, if we, by a new sin, forfeit God's former loving-kindness. Such imprudence compared with theirs, who throw away in one night the wealth of long saving. They sow much and gather little, stay long and return empty, &c. This consideration ought to be effective in restraining us from sins, if the particulars be summed up: for he that hath lived well, and then falls into a deliberate sin, is infinitely dishonored, is most imprudent, unsafe, and unthankful.

2. Let persons tempted to single instances of sin in a laudable life, be very careful that they suffer not themselves to be drawn aside by the eminence of great examples: instances

cited. Exhortation, that we should first be as devout as David, and as good a Christian as St. Peter, and then we shall not dare, with design, to do that into which they fell by surprise: and if we should fall as they did, then, when we have repented like them, it may be said of us, that we did fall and break our bones, but God did heal and pardon us.

3. Remember, that since no man can please God, or be partaker of any promises, or reap the reward of any actions in the returns of eternity, unless he performs to God an intire duty, according to the capacities of a man so taught, tempted, and assisted, such a person must take care that he be not cozened with the duties and performances of any one relation. Some there are who think that all religion consists in prayer, or in public and private offices of devotion: others judge themselves as they are spoken of by their betters: some have been admired abroad, in whom their own family never saw any thing excellent, &c.

4. He that hath passed many stages of a good life, to prevent his being tempted to a single sin, must be very careful that he never entertain his spirit with the remembrance of past sins, nor amuse it with fantastic apprehension of the present. When the Israelites fancied the relish of the flesh-pots, they longed to return and taste: this topic enlarged on. We cannot stand, unless we be watchful in this particular.

These are the sorts of men who are to be used with compassion, concerning whom we are *to make a difference*, as says the text. Danger of the sins above-mentioned, and methods of our treating them in others, still farther dilated on.

II. *Others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire.* Some sins there are, which in their own nature are damnable; and some are such as will certainly bring a man to damnation: this topic dilated on. If any man hath fallen, by great and repeated crimes, into a sinful habit, his case is little less than

desperate: but that little hope which remains, has its degree, according to the infancy or the growth of the habit.

1. For all sins less than habitual, it is certain a pardon is ready on repentance; that is, to all that sin in ignorance, infirmity, or inadvertency; in small instances, or infrequent returns; with involuntary actions, or imperfect resolutions: but humility, and prayer, and watchfulness, are the direct instruments of the expiation of such sins.

2. But then, secondly, whosoever sins without these abating circumstances, that is, in great instances, where his understanding cannot be deceived; or in the frequent repetitions of any sin, where his choice cannot be surprised; where there is a love of the sin, and a power over his resolutions;—in these cases it is a miraculous grace, and an extraordinary change, that must turn the current of iniquity: and pardon is more uncertain, and repentance more difficult, and the man must be made miserable, that he may not be accursed for ever. 1. His pardon is uncertain, because there are some sins unpardonable, and they are not all particularly named, &c. 2. It may also be, that the time of pardon is past. 3. Pardon of such habitual sins is uncertain, because life itself is so; and such sins require much time for expiation. 4. Every delay of return is, in the case of habitual sins, an approach to desperation; because the nature of habits is like that of crocodiles, which grow as long as they live, &c. But as the pardon of these sins is uncertain, so the conditions of restitution are hard even to them who shall be pardoned. St. James (ch. iv. 1. 3.) plainly declares the possibility of pardon to great sins, these specified: and also (ch. v. 20.) implies it to an habitual sinner. But then, the way that he appoints for the restitution of such persons, is humiliation, penances, and afflictions, resisting the devil, returning to God with weeping and mourning, &c. (ch. iv. and v.) These are harder conditions than God requires in the former cases; and are a kind of fiery trial.

Some additional cautions given; since the nature of these sins is such, that they may increase in weight and duration; and then they will increase in mischief and fatal effects; and so go beyond the text. One more topic dilated on; namely, that there are some single actions of sin, of so great malice, that in their own nature they are beyond the limit of gospel pardon: several such enumerated. Conclusion.

SERMON VIII.

OF GROWTH IN SIN; OR, THE SEVERAL STATES AND DEGREES OF SINNERS, WITH THE MANNER HOW THEY ARE TO BE TREATED.

JUDE,—VERSES 22, 23.

And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire.

PART I.

MAN hath but one entrance into the world, but a thousand ways to pass from thence. And as it is in the natural, so it is in the spiritual: nothing but the union of faith and obedience can secure our regeneration, and our new birth, and can bring us to see the light of heaven; but there are a thousand passages of turning into darkness. And it is not enough, that our bodies are exposed to so many sad infirmities and dishonorable imperfections, unless our soul also be a subject capable of so many diseases, irregular passions, false principles, accursed habits and degrees of perverseness, that the very kinds of them are reducible to a method, and make up the part of a science. There are variety of stages and descents to death, as there are diversity of torments, and of sad regions of misery in hell, which is the centre and kingdom of sorrows. But that we may a little refresh the sadnesses of this consideration; for every one of these stages of sin, God hath measured out a proportion of mercy; for, 'If sin abounds, grace shall much more abound;' and 'God hath concluded all under sin,' not with purposes to

destroy us, but *ut omnium misereatur*, 'that he might have mercy on all;' that light may break forth from the deepest inclosures of darkness, and mercy may rejoice on the recessions of justice, and grace may triumph on the ruins of sin, and God may be glorified in the miracles of our conversion, and the wonders of our preservation, and glories of our being saved. There is no state of sin, but, if we be persons capable (according to God's method of healing) of receiving antidotes, we shall find a sheet of mercy spread over our wounds and nakedness. If our diseases be small, almost necessary, scarce avoidable; then God does, and so we are commanded to cure them, and cover them with a veil of pity, compassion, and gentle remedies: if our evils be violent, inveterate, gangrened, and incorporated into our nature by evil customs, they must be pulled from the flames of hell with censures, and cauteries, and punishments, and sharp remedies, quickly and rudely; their danger is present and sudden, its effect is quick and intolerable, and there are no soft counsels then to be entertained; they are already in the fire, but they may be saved for all that. So great, so infinite, so miraculous is God's mercy, that he will not give a sinner over, though the hairs of his head be singed with the flames of hell. God's desires of having us to be saved continue, even when we begin to be damned; even till we will not be saved, and are gone beyond God's method, and all the revelations of his kindness. And certainly that is a bold and a mighty sinner, whose iniquity is swelled beyond all the bulk and heap of God's revealed loving-kindness: if sin hath swelled beyond grace, and superabounds over it, that sin is gone beyond the measures of a man; such a person is removed beyond all the malice of human nature, into the evil and spite of devils and accursed spirits; there is no greater sadness in the world than this. God hath not appointed a remedy in the vast treasures of grace for some men, and some sins: they have sinned like the fallen angels, and having overrun the ordinary evil inclinations of their nature, they are without the protection of the Divine mercy, and the conditions of that grace, which was designed to save all the world, and was sufficient to have saved twenty. This is a condition to be avoided with the care of God and his angels, and all the whole industry of man. In

order to which end, my purpose now is to remonstrate to you the several states of sin and death, together with those remedies which God had proportioned out to them; that we may observe the evils of the least, and so avoid the intolerable mischiefs of the greater, even of those sins which still are within the power and possibilities of recovery; lest insensibly we fall into those sins, and into those circumstances of person, for which Christ never died, which the Holy Ghost never means to cure, and which the eternal God never will pardon: for there are of this kind more than commonly men imagine, whilst they amuse their spirits with gaieties and false principles, till they have run into horrible impieties, from whence they are not willing to withdraw their foot, and God is resolved never to snatch and force them thence.

I. 'Of some have compassion.'—And these I shall reduce to four heads or orders of men and actions; all which have their proper cure proportionable to their proper state, gentle remedies to the lesser irregularities of the soul. 1. The first are those, that sin without observation of their particular state; either because they are uninstructed in the special cases of conscience, or because they do an evil, against which there is no express commandment. It is a sad calamity, that there are so many millions of men and women that are entered into a state of sickness and danger, and yet are made to believe they are in perfect health; and they do actions, concerning which they never made a question whether they were just or no, nor were ever taught by what names to call them. For while they observe that modesty is sometimes abused by a false name, and called clownishness and want of breeding; and contentedness and temperate living is suspected to be want of courage and noble thoughts, and severity of life is called imprudent and unsociable; and simplicity and hearty honesty is counted foolish and impolitic: they are easily tempted to honor prodigality and foolish dissolution of their estates with the title of liberal and noble usages. Timorousness is called caution, rashness is called quickness of spirit, covetousness is frugality, amorousness is society and gentile, peevishness and anger is courage, flattery is humane and courteous: and under these false veils virtue slips away (like truth from under the hand of them that

fight for her), and leaves vice dressed up with the same imagery, and the fraud not discovered till the day of recompenses, when men are distinguished by their rewards. But so men think they sleep freely, when their spirits are laden with a lethargy; and they call a hectic fever the vigor of a natural heat, till nature changes those less discerned states into the notorious images of death. Very many men never consider, whether they sin or no in ten thousand of their actions, every one of which is very disputable, and do not think they are bound to consider: these men are to be pitied and instructed; they are to be called on to use religion like a daily diet; their consciences must be made tender, and their catechism enlarged; teach them, and make them sensible, and they are cured.

But the other sins in this place are more considerable: men sin without observation, because their actions have no restraint of an express commandment, no letter of the law to condemn them by an express sentence. And this happens, when the crime is comprehended under a general notion, without the instancing of particulars; for if you search over all the Scripture, you shall never find incest named and marked with the black character of death; and there are divers sorts of uncleanness to which Scripture therefore gives no name, because she would have them have no being. And it had been necessary that God should have described all particulars, and all kinds, if he had not given reason to man; for so it is fit that a guide should point out every turning, if he be to teach a child or a fool to return unto his father's roof. But he that bids us avoid intemperance for fear of a fever, supposes you to be sufficiently instructed that you may avoid the plague; and, when to look on a woman with lust is condemned, it will not be necessary to add, "You must not do more," when even the least is forbidden; and when to uncover the nakedness of Noah brought a universal plague on the posterity of Cham, it was not necessary that the lawgiver should say, "You must not ascend to your father's bed, or draw the curtains from your sister's retirements." When the Athenians forbade to transport figs from Athens, there was no need to name the gardens of Alcibiades; much less was it necessary to add, that Chabrias should send no plants to Sparta. Whatsoever is comprised under the ge-

neral notion, and partakes of the common nature and the same iniquity, needs no special prohibition; unless we think we can mock God, and elude his holy precepts with an absurd trick of mistaken logic. I am sure that will not save us harmless from a thunderbolt.

2. Men sin without an express prohibition, when they commit a thing that is like a forbidden evil. And when St. Paul had reckoned many works of the flesh, he adds, 'and such like,' all that have the same unreasonableness and carnality. For thus polygamy is unlawful: for if it be not lawful for a Christian 'to put away his wife, and marry another, unless for adultery,' much less may he keep a first, and take a second, when the first is not put away. If a Christian may not be drunk with wine, neither may he be drunk with passion; if he may not kill his neighbor, neither then must he tempt him to sin, for that destroys him more; if he may not wound him, then he may not persuade him to intemperance and a drunken fever; if it be not lawful to cozen a man, much less is it permitted that he make a man a fool, and a beast, and exposed to every man's abuse, and to all ready evils. And yet men are taught to start at the one half of these, and make no conscience of the other half; whereof some have a greater baseness than the other that are named, and all have the same unreasonableness.

3. A man is guilty, even when no law names his action, if he does any thing that is a cause or an effect, a part or unhandsome adjunct, of a forbidden instance. He that forbade all intemperance, is as much displeased with the infinite of foolish talk that happens at such meetings, as he is at the spoiling of the drink, and the destroying the health. If God cannot endure wantonness, how can he suffer lascivious dressings, tempting circumstances, wanton eyes, high diet? If idleness be a sin, then all immoderate misspending of our time, all long and tedious games, all absurd contrivances how to throw away a precious hour, and a day of salvation also, are against God, and against religion. He that is commanded to be charitable, it is also intended he should not spend his money vainly, but be a good husband and provident, that he may be able to give to the poor, as he would be to purchase a lordship, or pay his daughter's portion. And on this stock it is that Christian

religion forbids jeering and immoderate laughter, and reckons 'jestings' amongst the 'things that are unseemly.' This also would be considered.

4. Besides the express laws of our religion, there is a universal line and limit to our passions and designs, which is called "the analogy of Christianity;" that is, the proportion of its sanctity, and the strictness of its holy precepts. This is not forbidden; but does this become you? Is it decent to see a Christian live in plenty and ease, and heap up money, and never to partake of Christ's passions? There is no law against a judge's being a dresser of gardens, or a gatherer of sycamore fruits; but it becomes him not, and deserves a reproof. If I do exact justice to my neighbor, and cause him to be punished legally for all the evils he makes me suffer, I have not broken a fragment from the stony tables of the law: but this is against the analogy of our religion; it does not become a disciple of so gentle a Master to take all advantages that he can. Christ, that quitted all the glories that were essential to him, and that grew up in his nature when he lodged in his Father's bosom; Christ, that suffered all the evils due for the sins of mankind, himself remaining most innocent; Christ, that promised persecution, injuries, and affronts, as part of our present portion, and gave them to his disciples as a legacy, and gave us his Spirit to enable us to suffer injuries, and made that the parts of suffering evils should be the matter of three or four Christian graces, of patience, of fortitude, of longanimity, and perseverance; he that of eight beatitudes, made that five of them should be instanced in the matter of humiliation and suffering temporal inconvenience;—that blessed Master was certainly desirous that his disciples should take their crowns from the cross, not from the evenness and felicities of the world; he intended we should give something, and suffer more things, and forgive all things, all injuries whatsoever. And though together with this may consist our securing a just interest; yet, in very many circumstances, we shall be put to consider, how far it becomes us to quit something of that, to pursue peace; and when we have secured the letter of the law, that we also look to its analogy; when we do what we are strictly bound to, then also we must consider what becomes us, who are disciples of such a Master,

who are instructed with such principles, charmed with so severe precepts, and invited with the certainty of infinite rewards. Now, although this discourse may seem new and strange and very severe, yet it is infinitely reasonable, because Christianity is a law of love and voluntary services; it can in no sense be confined with laws and strict measures: well may the ocean receive its limits, and the whole capacity of fire be glutted, and the grave have his belly so full that it shall cast up all its bowels, and disgorge the continued meal of so many thousand years: but love can never have a limit; and it is indeed to be swallowed up, but nothing can fill it but God, who hath no bound. Christianity is a law for sons, not for servants; and God, that gives his grace without measure, and rewards without end, and acts of favor beyond our askings, and provides for us beyond our needs, and gives us counsels beyond commandments, intends not to be limited out by the just evennesses and stricken measures of the words of a commandment. Give to God 'full measure, shaken together, pressed down, heaped up, and running over;' for God does so to us: and when we have done so to him, we are infinitely short of the least measure of what God does for us; 'we are still unprofitable servants.' And therefore, as the breaking any of the laws of Christianity provokes God to anger, so the prevaricating in the analogy of Christianity stirs him up to jealousy. He hath reason to suspect our hearts are not right with him, when we are so reserved in the matter and measures of our services; and if we will give God but just what he calls for by express mandate, it is just in him to require all of that at our hands without any abatement, and then we are sure to miscarry. And let us remember, that when God said he was 'a jealous God,' he expressed the meaning of it to be, he did 'punish to the third and fourth generation.' "Jealousy is like the rage of a man;" but if it be also like the anger of God, it is insupportable, and will crush us into the ruins of our grave.

But because these things are not frequently considered, there are very many sins committed against religion, which, because the commandment hath not marked, men refuse to mark, and think God requires no more. I am entered into a sea of matter, which I must not now prosecute; but I shall only note this to

you, that it is but reasonable we should take accounts of our lives by the proportions, as well as by the express rules, of our religion, because in human and civil actions all the nations of the world use to call their subjects to account. For that which in the accounts of men is called reputation and public honesty, is the same which in religion we call analogy and proportion; in both cases there being some things which are besides the notices of laws, and yet are the most certain consignations of an excellent virtue. He is a base person that does any thing against public honesty; and yet no man can be punished, if he marries a wife the next day after his first wife's funeral: and so he that prevaricates the proportions and excellent reasons of Christianity, is a person without zeal and without love; and, unless care be taken of him, he will quickly be without religion. But yet these, I say, are a sort of persons, which are to be used with gentleness, and treated with compassion; for no man must be handled roughly to force him to do a kindness; and coercion of laws and severity of judges, serjeants, and executioners, are against offenders of commandments; but the way to cure such persons, is the easiest and gentlest remedy of all others. They are to be instructed in all the parts of duty, and invited forward by the consideration of the great rewards which are laid up for all the sons of God, who serve him without constraint, without measures and allays, even as fire burns, and as the roses grow, even as much as they can, and to all the extent of their natural and artificial capacities. For it is a thing fit for our compassion, to see men fettered in the iron bands of laws, and yet to break the golden chains of love; but all those instruments, which are proper to enkindle the love of God and to turn fear into charity, are the proper instances of that compassion which is to be used towards these men.

II. The next sort of those who are in the state of sin, and yet to be handled gently and with compassion, are those who entertain themselves with the beginnings and little entrances of sin; which as they are to be more pitied, because they often come by reason of inadvertency, and an unavoidable weakness in many degrees; so they are more to be taken care of, because they are undervalued, and undiscernibly run into inconvenience. When we see a child strike a servant rudely, or jeer a silly

person, or wittingly cheat his play-fellow, or talk words light as the skirt of a summer garment; we laugh, and are delighted with the wit and confidence of the boy, and encourage such hopeful beginnings; and in the mean time we consider not that from these beginnings he shall grow up, till he become a tyrant, an oppressor, a gost, and a traitor. *Nemo simul malus fit, et malus esse cernitur; sicut nec scorpiis tum innascuntur stimuli, cum pungunt;* "No man is discerned to be vicious so soon as he is so;" and vices have their infancy and their childhood; and it cannot be expected that in a child's age should be the vice of a man; that were monstrous, as if he wore a beard in his cradle; "and we do not believe that a serpent's sting does just then grow, when he strikes us in a vital part;" the venom and the little spear were there, when it first began to creep from its little shell. And little boldnesses and looser words, and wranglings for nuts, and lying for trifles, are of the same proportion to the malice of a child, as impudence, and duels, and injurious law-suits, and false witness in judgment, and perjuries, are in men. And the case is the same when men enter on a new stock of any sin: the vice is at first apt to be put out of countenance, and a little thing discourages it, and it amuses the spirit with words, and fantastic images, and cheap instances of sin; and men think themselves safe, because they are as yet safe from laws, and the sin does not as yet outcry the healthful noise of Christ's loud cryings and intercession with his Father, nor call for thunder or an amazing judgment; but, according to the old saying, "The thorns of Dauphine will never fetch blood, if they do not scratch the first day;" and we shall find that the little indecencies and riflings of our souls, the first openings and disparkings of our virtue, differ only from the state of perdition, as infancy does from old age, as sickness from death; it is the entrance into those regions, whither whosoever passes finally, shall lie down and groan with an eternal sorrow. Now in this case it may happen, that a compassion may ruin a man, if it be the pity of an indiscreet mother, and nurse the sin from its weakness to the strength of habit and impudence. The compassion that is to be used to such persons, is the compassion of a physician or a severe tutor: chastise thy infant-sin by discipline and acts of virtue; and never begin that way,

from whence you must return with some trouble and much shame; or else, if you proceed, you finish your eternal ruin.

He that means to be temperate, and avoid the crime and dishonor of being a drunkard, must not love to partake of the songs, or to bear a part in the foolish scenes of laughter, which distract wisdom, and fright her from the company. And Lævina, that was chaster than the elder Sabines, and severer than her philosophical guardian, was well instructed in the great lines of honor and cold justice to her husband: but when she gave way to the wanton ointments and looser circumstances of Baiæ, and bathed often in Avernus, and from thence hurried to the companies and dressings of Lucrinus, she quenched her honor, and gave her virtue and her body as a spoil to the follies and intemperance of a young gentleman.* For so have I seen the little purls of a spring sweat through the bottom of a bank, and intenerate the stubborn pavement, till it hath made it fit for the impression of a child's foot; and it was despised, like the descending purls of a misty morning, till it had opened its way, and made a stream large enough to carry away the ruins of the undermined strand, and to invade the neighboring gardens; but then the despised drops were grown into an artificial river, and an intolerable mischief. So are the first entrances of sin stopped with the antidotes of a hearty prayer, and checked into sobriety by the eye of a reverend man, or the counsels of a single sermon: but when such beginnings are neglected, and our religion hath not in it so much philosophy as to think any thing evil as long as we can endure it, they grow up to ulcers and pestilential evils; they destroy the soul by their abode, who, at their first entry, might have been killed with the pressure of a little finger.

Ἀρχὴν ἰᾶσθαι πολὺ λέϊον ἢ τελευτήν.

Those men are in a condition, in which they may, if they please, pity themselves; keep their green wound from festering and uncleanness, and it will heal alone: *Non procul absunt*, 'They are not far' from the kingdom of heaven, but they are not within its portion. And let me say this, that although little sins have not yet made our condition desperate, but left it

* "Casta nec," &c.—Martial, lib. i.

easily recoverable; yet it is a condition that is quite out of God's favor: although they are not far advanced in their progress to ruin, yet they are not at all in the state of grace; and, therefore, though they are to be pitied and relieved accordingly, yet that supposes the incumbency of a present misery.

III. There are some very much to be pitied and assisted, because they are going into hell, and, as matters stand with them, they cannot, or they think they cannot, avoid it. *Quidam ad alienum dormiunt somnum, ad alienum edunt appetitum: amare et odisse* (*res omnium maxime liberas*) *jubentur:* "There are some persons whose life is so wholly in dependence from others, that they sleep when others please, they eat and drink according to their master's appetite or intemperance: they are commanded to love or hate, and are not left free in the very charter and privileges of nature." *Miserum est, servire sub dominis parum felicibus.* For suppose the prince or the patron be vicious; suppose he calls his servants to bathe their souls in the goblets of intemperance; if he be also imperious, (for such persons love not to be contradicted in their vices) it is the loss of that man's fortune not to lose his soul; and it is the servant's excuse, and he esteems it also his glory, that he can tell a merry tale, how his master and himself did swim in drink, till they both talked like fools, and then did lie down like beasts. *Facinus quos inquinat, æquat:* there is then no difference, but that the one is the fairest bull, and the master of the herd. And how many tenants and relatives are known to have a servile conscience, and to know no affirmation or negation but such as shall serve their landlord's interest! Alas! the poor men live by it, and they must beg their bread, if ever they turn recreant, or shall offer to be honest. There are some trades whose very foundation is laid in the vice of others; and in many others, if a thread of deceit do not quite run through all their negotiations, they decay into the sorrows of beggary; and, therefore, they will support their neighbor's vice, that he may support their trade. And what would you advise those men to do, to whom a false oath is offered to their lips and a dagger at their heart? Their reason is surprised, and their choice is seized on, and all their consultation is arrested; and if they did not prepare beforehand, and stand armed with reli-

gion and perfect resolution, would not any man fall, and think that every good man will say his case is pitiable? Although no temptation is bigger than the grace of God, yet many temptations are greater than our strengths; and we do not live at the rate of a mighty and a victorious grace.

Those persons which cause these vicious necessities on their brethren, will lie low in hell; but the others will have but small comfort in feeling a lesser damnation.

Of the same consideration it is, when ignorant people are catechised into false doctrine, and know nothing but such principles which weaken the nerves and enfeeble the joints of holy living; they never heard of any other. Those that follow great and evil examples, the people that are engaged in the public sins of a kingdom, which they understand not, and either must venture to be undone on the strength of their own little reasonings and weak discoursings, or else must go *qua itur, non qua eundum est*, there where the popular misery hath made the way plain before their eyes, though it be uneven and dangerous to their consciences. In these cases I am forced to reckon a catalogue of mischiefs; but it will be hard to cure any of them. Aristippus, in his discourses, was a great flatterer of Dionysius of Sicily, and did own doctrines which might give an easiness to some vices, and knew not how to contradict the pleasures of his prince, but seemed like a person disposed to partake of them, that the example of a philosopher and the practice of a king might do countenance to a shameful life. But when Dionysius sent him two women-slaves, fair and young, he sent them back, and shamed the easiness of his doctrine by the severity of his manners; he daring to be virtuous when he was alone, though, in the presence of him whom he thought it necessary to flatter, he had no boldness to own the virtue. So it is with too many: if they be left alone, and that they stand unshaken with the eye of their tempter, or the authority of their lord, they go whither their education or their custom carries them; but it is not in some natures to deny the face of a man and the boldness of a sinner, and, which is yet worse, it is not in most men's interest to do it. These men are in a pitiable condition, and are to be helped by the following rules.

1. Let every man consider that he hath two relations to serve, and he stands between God and his master and his nearest relative; and in such cases it comes to be disputed whether interest be preferred, which of the persons is to be displeased, God or my master, God or my prince, God or my friend. If we be servants of the man, remember also that I am a servant of God: add to this, that if my present service to the man be a slavery in me, and a tyranny in him, yet God's service is a noble freedom. And Apollonius said well, "It was for slaves to lie, and for freemen to speak the truth." 'If you be freed by the blood of the Son of God, then you are free indeed:' and then consider how dishonorable it is to lie, to the displeasure of God, and only to please your fellow-servant. The difference here is so great, that it might be sufficient only to consider the antithesis. Did the man make you what you are? Did he pay his blood for you, to save you from death? Does he keep you from sickness? True: you eat at his table; but they are of God's provisions that he and you feed of. Can your master free you from a fever, when you have drunk yourself into it; and restore your innocence, when you have forsworn yourself for his interest? Is the charge reasonable? He gives you meat and drink, for which you do him service: but is not he a tyrant and an usurper, an oppressor and an extortioner, if he will force thee to give thy soul for him, to sell thy soul for old shoes and broken bread? But when thou art to make thy accounts of eternity, will it be taken for an answer, My patron or my governor, my prince or my master, forced me to it? or, if it will not, will he undertake a portion of thy flames? or, if that may not be, will it be, in the midst of all thy torments, any ease to thy sorrows to remember all the rewards and clothes, all the money and civilities, all the cheerful looks and familiarity and fellowship of vices, which, in your lifetime, made your spirit so gay and easy? It will, in the eternal loads of sorrow, add a duplicate of groans and indignation, when it shall be remembered for how base and trifling an interest, and on what weak principles, we fell sick and died eternally.

2. The next advice to persons thus tempted is, that they would learn to separate duty from mistaken interest, and let them be both served in their just proportions, when we have

learned to make a difference. A wife is bound to her husband in all his just designs, and in all noble usages and Christian comportments: but a wife is no more bound to pursue her husband's vicious hatreds, than to serve and promote his unlawful and wandering loves. It is not always a part of duty to think the same propositions, or to curse the same persons, or to wish him success in unjust designs: and yet the sadness of it is, that a good woman is easily tempted to believe the cause to be just; and when her affection hath forced her judgment, her judgment for ever after shall carry the affection to all its erring and abused determinations. A friend is turned a flatterer, if he does not know that the limits of friendship extend no farther than the pale and inclosures of reason and religion. No master puts it into his covenant that his servant shall be drunk with him, or give in evidence in his master's cause, according to his master's scrolls: and, therefore, it is besides and against the duty of a servant to sin by that authority; it is as if he should set mules to keep his sheep, or make his dogs to carry burdens; it is besides their nature and design. And if any person falls under so tyrannical relation, let him consider how hard a master he serves, where the devil gives the employment, and shame is his entertainment, and sin is his work, and hell is his wages. Take, therefore, the counsel of the son of Sirach: 'Accept no person against thy soul, and let not the reverence of any man cause thee to fall.'*

3. When passion mingles with duty, and is a necessary instrument of serving God, let not passion run its own course, and pass on to liberty, and thence to license and dissolution; but let no more of it be entertained than will just do the work. For no zeal of duty will warrant a violent passion to prevaricate a duty. I have seen some officers of war, in passion and zeal of their duty, have made no scruple to command a soldier with a dialect of cursing and accents of swearing, and pretended they could not else speak words effective enough, and of sufficient authority: and a man may easily be overtaken in the issues of his government while his authority serves itself with passion; if he be not curious in his measures, his

* Ecclus. iv. 22.

passion also will serve itself on the authority, and overrule the ruler.

4. Let every such tempted person remember, that all evil comes from ourselves, and not from others; and, therefore, all pretences and prejudices, all commands and temptations, all opinions and necessities, are but instances of our weakness, and arguments of our folly; for, unless we listed, no man can make us drink beyond our measures; and if I tell a lie for my master's or my friend's advantage, it is because I prefer a little end of money or flattery before my honor and my innocence. They are huge follies which go up and down in the mouths and heads of men: "He that knows not how to dissemble, knows not how to reign:" He that will not do as his company does, must go out of the world, and quit all society of men. We create necessities of our own, and then think we have reason to serve their importunity. *Non ego sum ambitiosus, sed nemo aliter Romæ potest vivere; non ego sumptuosus, sed urbs ipsa magnas impensas exigit. Non est meum vitium quod iracundus sum, quod nondum constitui certum vitæ genus; adolescentia hæc facit:* "The place we live in makes us expensive, the state of life I have chosen renders me ambitious, my age makes me angry or lustful, proud or peevish." These are nothing else but resolutions never to mend as long as we can have excuses for our follies, and until we can cozen ourselves no more. There is no such thing as necessity for a prince to dissemble, or for a servant to lie, or for a friend to flatter, for a civil person and a sociable to be drunk; we cozen ourselves with thinking the fault is so much derivative from others, till the smart and the shame falls on ourselves, and covers our heads with sorrow. And unless this gap be stopped, and that we build our duty on our own bottoms, as supported with the grace of God, there is no vice but may find a patron,—and no age, or relation, or state of life, but will be an engagement to sin; and we shall think it necessary to be lustful in our youth, and revengeful in our manhood, and covetous in our old age; and we shall perceive that every state of men, and every trade and profession, lives on the vices of others, or on their miseries, and, therefore, they will think it necessary to promote or to wish it. If men were temperate, physicians would be poor; and unless some

princes were ambitious, or others injurious, there would be no employment for soldiers. The vintner's retail supports the merchant's trade, and it is a vice that supports the vintner's retail; and if all men were wise and sober persons, we should have fewer beggars and fewer rich. And if our lawgivers should imitate Demades of Athens, who condemned a man that lived by selling things belonging to funerals, as supposing he could not choose but wish the death of men, by whose dying he got his living; we should find most men accounted criminals, because vice is so involved in the affairs of the world, that it is made the support of many trades, and the business of great multitudes of men. Certainly from hence it is that iniquity does so much abound; and unless we state our questions right, and perceive the evil to be designed only from ourselves, and that no such pretence shall keep off the punishment or the shame from ourselves, we shall fall into a state which is only capable of compassion, because it is irrecoverable; and then we shall be infinitely miserable, when we can only receive a useless and ineffective pity. Whatsoever is necessary cannot be avoided; he, therefore, that shall say, he cannot avoid his sin, is out of the mercies of this text: they who are appointed guides and physicians of souls, cannot, to any purposes, do their offices of pity. It is necessary that we serve God, and do our duty, and secure the interest of our souls, and be as careful to preserve our relations to God as to our friend or prince. But if it can be necessary for any man, in any condition, to sin, it is also necessary for that man to perish.

SERMON VIII.

PART II.

IV. The last sort of them that sin, and yet are to be treated with compassion, is of them that interrupt the course of an honest life with single acts of sin, stepping aside and 'starting

like a broken bow;' whose resolution stands fair, and their hearts are towards God, and they sojourn in religion, or rather dwell there; but that, like evil husbands, they go abroad, and enter into places of dishonor and unthriftiness. Such as these all stories remember with a sad character; and every narrative concerning David, which would end in honor and fair report, is sullied with the remembrances of Bathsheba; and the Holy Ghost hath called him 'a man after God's own heart, save in the matter of Uriah:' there, indeed, he was a man after his own heart; even then, when his reason was stolen from him by passion, and his religion was sullied by the beauties of a fair woman. I wish we lived in an age, in which the people were to be treated with concerning renouncing the single actions of sin, and the seldom interruptions of piety. Men are taught to say, that every man sins in every action he does; and this is one of the doctrines, for the believing of which he shall be accounted a good man: and on this ground it is easy for men to allow themselves some sins, when, in all cases and in every action, it is unavoidable. I shall say nothing of the question, save that the Scriptures reckon otherwise; and in the accounts of David's life reckon but one great sin; and in Zachary and Elizabeth give a testimony of an unblamable conversation; and Hezekiah did not make his confession when he prayed to God in his sickness, and said, 'he had walked uprightly before God:' and, therefore, St. Paul, after his conversion, designed and labored hard, and therefore, certainly, with hopes to accomplish it, that 'he might keep his conscience void of offence, both towards God and towards man;' and one of Christ's great purposes is, 'to present his whole church pure and spotless to the throne of grace;' and St. John the Baptist offended none but Herod; and no pious Christian brought a bill of accusation against the holy virgin-mother. Certain it is, that God hath given us precepts of such a holiness and such a purity, such a meekness and such humility, as hath no pattern but Christ, no precedent but the purities of God: and, therefore, it is intended we should live with a life, whose actions are not chequered with white and black, half sin and half virtue. God's sheep are not like Jacob's flock, 'streaked and spotted;' it is an intire holiness that God requires, and will not endure to have a holy course

interrupted by the dishonor of a base and ignoble action. I do not mean that a man's life can be as pure as the sun, or the rays of celestial Jerusalem; but like the moon, in which there are spots, but they are no deformity; a lessening only and an abatement of light, no cloud to hinder and draw a veil before its face, but sometimes it is not so serene and bright as at other times. Every man hath his indiscretions and infirmities, his arrests and sudden incursions, his neighborhoods and semblances of sin, his little violences to reason, and peevish melancholy, and humorous, fantastic discourses; unaptness to a devout prayer, his fondness to judge favorably in his own cases, little deceptions, and voluntary and involuntary cozenages, ignorances, and inadvertencies, careless hours, and unwatchful seasons. But no good man ever commits one act of adultery; no godly man will, at any time, be drunk; or if he be, he ceases to be a godly man, and is run into the confines of death, and is sick at heart, and may die of the sickness, die eternally. This happens more frequently in persons of an infant-piety, when the virtue is not corroborated by a long abode, and a confirmed resolution, and a usual victory, and a triumphant grace; and the longer we are accustomed to piety, the more infrequent will be the little breaches of folly, and a returning to sin. But as the needle of a compass, when it is directed to its beloved star, at the first addresses waves on either side, and seems indifferent in his courtship of the rising or declining sun; and when it seems first determined to the north, stands awhile trembling, as if it suffered inconvenience in the first fruition of its desires, and stands not still in full enjoyment till after first a great variety of motion, and then an undisturbed posture; so is the piety and so is the conversion of a man, wrought by degrees and several steps of imperfection: and at first our choices are wavering; convinced by the grace of God, and yet not persuaded; and then persuaded, but not resolved; and then resolved, but deferring to begin; and then beginning, but, as all beginnings are, in weakness and uncertainty; and we fly out often into huge indiscretions, and look back to Sodom, and long to return to Egypt: and when the storm is quite over, we find little bubblings and unevennesses on the face of the waters; we often weaken our own purposes by the returns of sin; and we do not

call ourselves conquerors, till by the long possession of virtues it is a strange and unusual, and, therefore, an uneasy and unpleasant thing, to act a crime. When Polemon of Athens, by chance coming into the schools of Xenocrates, was reformed on the hearing of that one lecture, some wise men gave this censure of him: *Peregrinatus est hujus animus in nequitia, non habitavit:* "His mind wandered in wickedness, and travelled in it, but never dwelt there." The same is the case of some men; they make inroads into the enemy's country, not like enemies to spoil, but like Dinah, to be satisfied with the stranger beauties of the land, till their virtues are deflowered, and they enter into tragedies, and are possessed by death and intolerable sorrows. But because this is like the fate of Jacob's daughter, and happens not by design, but folly; not by malice, but surprise; not by the strength of will, but by the weakness of grace; and yet carries a man to the same place whither a great vice usually does; it is hugely pitiable, and the persons are to be treated with compassion, and to be assisted by the following considerations and exercises.

First, let us consider, that for a good man to be overtaken in a single crime is the greatest dishonor and unthriftiness in the whole world. 'As a fly in a box of ointment, so is a little folly to him who is accounted wise,' said the son of Sirach. No man chides a fool for his weaknesses, or scorns a child for playing with flies, and preferring the present appetite before all the possibilities of to-morrow's event; but men wondered when they saw Socrates ride on a cane; and when Solomon laid his wisdom at the foot of Pharaoh's daughter, and changed his glory for the interest of wanton sleep, he became the discourse of heaven and earth: and men think themselves abused, and their expectation cozened, when they see a wise man do the actions of a fool, and a good man seized on by the dishonors of a crime. But the loss of his reputation is the least of his evil. It is the greatest improvidence in the world to let a healthful constitution be destroyed in the surfeit of one night. For although, when a man, by the grace of God and a long endeavor, hath obtained the habit of Christian graces, every single sin does not spoil the habit of virtue, because that cannot be lost but as it was gotten, that is, by parts and succession; yet every

crime interrupts the acceptation of the grace, and makes the man to enter into the state of enmity and displeasure with God. The habit is only lessened naturally, but the value of it is wholly taken away. And in this sense is that of Josephus, Τὸ γὰρ ἐπὶ μικροῖς καὶ μεγάλοις παρανομεῖν ἰσοδύναμόν ἐστι· which St. James well renders, 'He that keeps the whole law, and offends in one point, is guilty of all;'* that is, if he prevaricates in any commandment, the transgression of which, by the law, was capital,—he shall as certainly die as if he broke the whole law. And the same is the case of those single actions which the school calls deadly sins, that is, actions of choice in any sin that hath a name; and makes a kind, and hath a distinct matter. And sins once pardoned return again to all the purposes of mischief, if we, by a new sin, forfeit God's former loving-kindness. 'When the righteous man turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be remembered: in the trespass that he hath trespassed, and in the sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.'† Now then consider how great a fool he is, who, when he hath, with much labor and by suffering violence, contradicted his first desires; when his spirit hath been in agony and care, and, with much uneasiness, hath denied to please the lower man; when, with many prayers and groans, and innumerable sighs, and strong cryings to God, with sharp sufferances and a long severity, he hath obtained of God to begin his pardon and restitution, and that he is in some hopes to return to God's favor, and that he shall become an heir of heaven; when some of his amazing fears and distracting cares begin to be taken off; when he begins to think that now it is not certain he shall perish in a sad eternity, but he hopes to be saved, and he considers how excellent a condition that is; he hopes, when he dies, to go to God, and that he shall never enter into the possession of devils; and this state, which is but the twilight of a glorious felicity, he hath obtained with great labor, and much care, and infinite danger: that this man should throw all this structure down, and then, when he is ready to reap the fruits of his labors, by one indiscreet action to set fire

* Chap. ii. 10. † Ezek. xviii. 24.

on his corn fields, and destroy all his dear-earned hopes, for the madness and loose wanderings of an hour: this man is an indiscreet gamester, who doubles his stake as he thrives, and, at one throw, is dispossessed of all the prosperities of a lucky hand.

They that are poor, as Plutarch observes, are careless of little things; because, by saving them, they think no great moments can accrue to their estates; and they, despairing to be rich, think such frugality impertinent: but they that feel their banks swell, and are within the possibilities of wealth, think it useful if they reserve the smaller minutes of expense, knowing that every thing will add to their heap. But then, after long sparing, in one night to throw away the wealth of a long purchase, is an imprudence becoming none but such persons who are to be kept under tutors and guardians, and such as are to be chastised by their servants, and to be punished by them whom they clothe and feed.

——— ἀλλὰ καὶ ἔμπης
Αἰσχρόν τοι δηρόν τε μένειν, κενεόν τε νέεσθαι.*

These men sow much and gather little, stay long and return empty; and after a long voyage they are dashed in pieces, when their vessels are laden with the spoils of provinces. Every deadly sin destroys the rewards of a seven years' piety. I add to this, that God is more impatient at a sin committed by his servants, than at many by persons that are his enemies; and an uncivil answer from a son to a father, from an obliged person to a benefactor, is a greater indecency, than if any enemy should storm his house, or revile him to his head. Augustus Cæsar taxed all the world, and God took no public notices of it; but when David taxed and numbered a petty province, it was not to be expiated without a plague; because such persons, besides the direct sin, add the circumstance of ingratitude to God, who hath redeemed them from their vain conversation, and from death, and from hell, and consigned them to the inheritance of sons, and given them his grace and his Spirit, and many periods of comfort, and a certain hope, and visible

* Hom. Il. B. 297.

earnests of immortality. Nothing is baser than that such a person, against his reason, against his interest, against his God, against so many obligations, against his custom, against his very habits and acquired inclinations, should do an action

Quam nisi seductis nequeas committere Divis;

which a man must for ever be ashamed of, and, like Adam, must run from God himself to do it, and depart from the state in which he had placed all his hopes, and to which he had designed all his labors. The consideration is effective enough, if we sum up the particulars; for he that hath lived well, and then falls into a deliberate sin, is infinitely dishonored, is most imprudent, most unsafe, and most unthankful.

2. Let persons tempted to the single instances of sin in the midst of a laudable life, be very careful that they suffer not themselves to be drawn aside by the eminence of great examples. For some think drunkenness hath a little honesty derived unto it by the example of Noah; and adultery is not so scandalous and intolerably dishonorable, since Bathsheba bathed, and David was defiled; and men think a flight is no cowardice, if a general turns his head and runs:

Pompeio fugiente timent.—Lucan, i. 522.

Well might all the gowned "Romans fear, when Pompey fled." And who is there that can hope to be more righteous than David, or stronger than Samson, or have less hypocrisy than St. Peter, or be more temperate than Noah? These great examples bear men of weak discourses and weaker resolutions from the severity of virtues. But, as Diagoras, to them that showed to him the votive garments of those that had escaped shipwreck, on their prayers and vows to Neptune, answered, that they kept no account of those that prayed and vowed, and yet were drowned; so do these men keep catalogues of those few persons who broke the thread of a fair life in sunder with the violence of a great crime, and, by the grace of God, recovered, and repented, and lived; but they consider not concerning those infinite numbers of men who died in their first fit of sickness, who, after a fair voyage, have thrown themselves overboard, and perished in a sudden wildness. One said well, *Si quid So-*

crates aut Aristippus contra morem et consuetudinem fecerunt, idem sibi ne arbitretur quis licere: magnis enim illi et divinis bonis hanc licentiam assequebantur.; "If Socrates did any unusual thing, it is not for thee, who art of an ordinary virtue, to assume the same license; for he, by a divine and excellent life, hath obtained leave or pardon respectively" for what thou must never hope for, till thou hast arrived to the same glories. First, be as devout as David, as good a Christian as St. Peter, and then thou wilt not dáre, with design, to act that which they fell into by surprise; and if thou dost fall as they did, by that time thou hast also repented like them, it may be said concerning thee, that thou didst fall and break thy bones, but God did heal thee and pardon thee. Remember that all the damned souls shall bear an eternity of torments for the pleasures of a short sinfulness; but for a single transient action to die for ever, is an intolerable exchange, and the effect of so great a folly, that whosoever falls into it, and then considers it, it will make him mad and distracted for ever.

3. Remember, that since no man can please God, or be partaker of any promises, or reap the reward of any actions in the returns of eternity, unless he performs to God an intire duty, according to the capacities of a man so taught, and so tempted, and so assisted; such a person must be curious, that he be not cozened with the duties and performances of any one relation. 1. Some there are, that think all our religion consists in prayers and public or private offices of devotion, and not in moral actions, or intercourses of justice and temperance, of kindness and friendships, of sincerity and liberality, of chastity and humility, of repentance and obedience. Indeed no humor is so easy to be counterfeited as devotion; and yet no hypocrisy is more common among men, nor any so useless as to God; for it being an address to him alone, who knows the heart and all the secret purposes, it can do no service in order to heaven, so long as it is without the power of godliness, and the energy and vivacity of a holy life. God will not suffer us to commute a duty, because all is his due; and religion shall not pay for want of temperance. If the devoutest hermit be proud; or he that 'fasts thrice in the week,' be uncharitable once; or he that gives much

to the poor, gives also too much liberty to himself; he hath planted a fair garden, and invited a wild boar to refresh himself under the shade of the fruit-trees; and his guest, being something rude, hath disordered his paradise, and made it become a wilderness. 2. Others there are, that judge themselves by the censures that kings and princes give concerning them, or as they are spoken of by their betters; and so make false judgments concerning their condition. For, our betters, to whom we show our best parts, to whom we speak with caution and consider what we represent, they see our arts and our dressings, but nothing of our nature and deformities: trust not their censures concerning thee; but to thy own opinion of thyself, whom thou knowest in thy retirements, and natural peevishness, and unhandsome inclinations, and secret baseness. 3. Some men have been admired abroad, in whom the wife and the servant never saw any thing excellent: a rare judge and a good commonwealth's man in the streets and public meetings, and a just man to his neighbor, and charitable to the poor; for in all these places the man is observed, and kept in awe by the sun, by light, and by voices; but this man is a tyrant at home, an unkind husband, an ill father, an imperious master. And such men are like 'prophets in their own countries,' not honored at home; and can never be honored by God, who will not endure that many virtues should excuse a few vices, or that any of his servants shall take pensions of the devil, and in the profession of his service do his enemy single advantages.

4. He that hath passed many stages of a good life, to prevent his being tempted to a single sin, must be very careful that he never entertain his spirit with the remembrances of his past sin, nor amuse it with the fantastic apprehensions of the present. When the Israelites fancied the sapidness and relish of the flesh-pots, they longed to taste and to return.

So when a Libyan tiger, drawn from his wilder foragings, is shut up, and taught to eat civil meat, and suffer the authority of a man, he sits down tamely in his prison, and pays to his keeper fear and reverence for his meat: but if he chance to come again, and taste a draught of warm blood, he presently leaps into his natural cruelty. He scarce abstains from eating those hands

that brought him discipline and food.* So is the nature of a man made tame and gentle by the grace of God, and reduced to reason, and kept in awe by religion and laws, and, by an awful virtue, is taught to forget those alluring and sottish relishes of sin: but if he diverts from his path, and snatches handfuls from the wanton vineyards, and remembers the lasciviousness of his unwholesome food, that pleased his childish palate; then he grows sick again, and hungry after unwholesome diet, and longs for the apples of Sodom. A man must walk through the world without eyes or ears, fancy or appetite, but such as are created and sanctified by the grace of God: and being once made a new man, he must serve all the needs of nature by the appetites and faculties of grace; nature must be wholly a servant; and we must so look towards the deliciousness of our religion and the ravishments of heaven, that our memory must be for ever useless to the affairs and perceptions of sin. We cannot stand, we cannot live, unless we be curious and watchful in this particular.

By these and all other arts of the spirit, if we stand on our guard, never indulging to ourselves one sin because it is but one, as knowing that one sin brought in death on all the world, and one sin brought slavery on the posterity of Cham; and always fearing lest death surprise us in that one sin; we shall, by the grace of God, either not need, or else easily perceive the effects and blessings of that compassion which God reserves, in the secrets of his mercy, for such persons whom his grace hath ordained and disposed with excellent dispositions unto life eternal.

These are the sorts of men which are to be used with compassion, concerning whom we are to make a difference; 'making a difference,' so says the text. And it is of high concernment that we should do so, that we may relieve the infirmities of the

* Sic ubi, desuetæ sylvis, in carcere clauso
Mansuevere feræ, et vultus posuere minaces,
Atque hominem didicere pati; si torrida parvus
Venit in ora cruor, redeunt rabiesque furorque,
Admonitæque tument gustato sanguine fauces;
Fervet, et a trepido vix abstinet ira magistro.

Phars. iv. 237.

men, and relieve their sicknesses, and transcribe the copy of the divine mercy, who loves not to 'quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed.' For although all sins are against God's commandments directly, or by certain consequents, by line, or by analogy; yet they are not all of the same tincture and mortality.

> Nec vincit ratio hoc, tantundem ut peccet idemque,
> Qui teneros caules alieni fregerit horti,
> Et qui nocturnus Divum sacra legerit.

"He that robs a garden of coleworts, and carries away an armful of spinach, does not deserve hell, as he that steals the chalice from the church, or betrays a prince;" and therefore men are distinguished accordingly.

> Est inter Tanaim quiddam socerumque Viselli.
> Hor. Sat. i. 1. 105.

The poet that Sejanus condemned for dishonoring the memory of Agamemnon was not an equal criminal with Catiline or Gracchus: and Simon Magus and the Nicolaitans committed crimes which God hated more than the complying of St. Barnabas, or the dissimulation of St. Peter; and therefore God does treat these persons severally. Some of these are restrained with a fit of sickness, some with a great loss, and in these there are degrees; and some arrive at death. And in this manner God scourged the Corinthians, for their irreverent and disorderly receiving the holy sacrament. For although even the least of the sins that I have discoursed of will lead to death eternal, if their course be not interrupted, and the disorder chastised; yet because we do not stop their progress instantly, God many times does, and visits us with proportionable judgments; and so not only checks the rivulet from swelling into rivers and a vastness, but plainly tells us, that although smaller crimes shall not be punished with equal severity as the greatest, yet even in hell there are eternal rods as well as eternal scorpions; and the smallest crime that we act with an infant malice and manly deliberation, shall be revenged with the lesser strokes of wrath, but yet with the infliction of a sad eternity. But then that we also should make a difference, is a precept con-

coming church-discipline, and therefore not here proper to be considered, but only as it may concern our own particulars in the actions of repentance, and our brethren in fraternal correction.

——— adsit
Regula, peccatis quæ pœnas irroget æquas,
Ne scutica dignum horribili sectere flagello.
Hor. Sat. i. 3. 115.

Let us be sure that we neglect no sin, but repent for every one, and judge ourselves for every one, according to the proportion of the malice, or the scandal, or the danger. And although in this there is no fear that we would be excessive; yet, when we are to reprove a brother, we are sharp enough, and, either by pride or by animosity, by the itch of government or the indignation of an angry mind, we run beyond the gentleness of a Christian monitor. We must remember, that by Christ's law some are to be admonished privately, some to be shamed and corrected publicly; and, beyond these, there is an abscission, or a cutting off from the communion of faithful people, 'a delivering over to Satan.' And to this purpose is that old reading of the words of my text, which is still in some copies, καὶ τοὺς μὲν ἐλέγχετε διακρινομένους, 'Reprove them sharply, when they are convinced,' or 'separate by sentence.' But because this also is a design of mercy acted with an instance of discipline, it is a punishment of the flesh, that the soul may be saved in the day of the Lord; it means the same with the usual reading, and with the last words of the text, and teaches us our usage towards the worst of recoverable sinners.

II. 'Others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire.' Some sins there are, which in their own nature are damnable, and some are such as will certainly bring a man to damnation: the first are curable, but with much danger; the second are desperate and irrecoverable. When a man is violently tempted, and allured with an object that is proportionable and pleasant to his vigorous appetite, and his unabated, unmortified nature, this man falls into death; but yet we pity him, as we pity a thief that robs for his necessity: this man did not tempt himself, but his spirit suffers violence, and his reason is invaded,

and his infirmities are mighty, and his aids not yet prevailing. But when this single temptation hath prevailed for a single instance, and leaves a relish on the palate, and this produces another, and that also is fruitful, and swells into a family and kindred of sin, that is, it grows first into approbation, then to a clear assent, and an untroubled conscience, thence into frequency, from thence unto a custom, and easiness, and a habit; this man is fallen into the fire. There are also some single acts of so great a malice, that they must suppose a man habitually sinful, before he could arrive at that height of wickedness. No man begins his sinful course with killing of his father or his prince: and Simon Magus had preambulatory impieties; he was covetous and ambitious long before he offered to buy the Holy Ghost. *Nemo repente fuit turpissimus.* And although such actions may have in them the malice and the mischief, the disorder and the wrong, the principle and the permanent effect of a habit and a long course of sin; yet because they never, or very seldom, go alone, but after the predisposition of other ushering crimes, we shall not amiss comprise them under the name of habitual sins: for such they are, either formally or equivalently. And if any man hath fallen into a sinful habit, into a course and order of sinning, his case is little less than desperate; but that little hope that is remanent, hath its degree, according to the infancy or the growth of the habit.

1. For all sins less than habitual, it is certain a pardon is ready to penitent persons; that is, to all that sin in ignorance or in infirmity, by surprise or inadvertency, in smaller instances or infrequent returns, with involuntary actions or imperfect resolutions. *Ἐκτείνατε τὰς χεῖρας ὑμῶν πρὸς τὸν αὐτοκράτορα Θεὸν, ἱκετεύοντες αὐτὸν ἵλεων γενέσθαι, εἴ τι ἄκοντες ἡμάρτετε,* said Clemens in his epistle: "Lift up your hands to Almighty God, and pray him to be merciful to you in all things, when you sin unwillingly;" that is, in which you sin with an imperfect choice. For no man sins against his will directly, but when his understanding is abused by an inevitable or an intolerable weakness, or their wills follow their blind guide, and are not the perfect mistresses of their own actions; and therefore leave a way and easiness to repent, and be ashamed of them, and therefore a possibility and readiness for pardon. And these are the sins that we are taught to pray to

God that he would pardon, as he gives us our bread, that is, every day. For 'in many things we offend all,' said St. James; that is, in many smaller matters, in matters of surprise or inevitable infirmity. And therefore Posidonius said, that St. Austin was used to say, that "he would not have even good and holy priests go from this world without the susception of equal and worthy penances:" and the most innocent life in our account is not a competent instrument of a peremptory confidence, and of justifying ourselves. 'I am guilty of nothing,' said St. Paul; that is, of no ill intent, or negligence, in preaching the gospel; 'yet I am not hereby justified;' for God, it may be, knows many little irregularities and insinuations of sin. In this case we are to make a difference; but humility, and prayer, and watchfulness, are the direct instruments of the expiation of such sins.

But then, secondly, whosoever sins without these abating circumstances, that is, in great instances, in which a man's understanding cannot be cozened, as in drunkenness, murder, adultery; and in the frequent repetitions of any sort of sin whatsoever, in which a man's choice cannot be surprised, and in which it is certain there is a love of sin, and a delight in it, and a power over a man's resolutions; in these cases it is a miraculous grace, and an extraordinary change, that must turn the current and the stream of the iniquity; and when it is begun, the pardon is more uncertain, and the repentance more difficult, and the effect much abated, and the man must be made miserable, that he may not be accursed for ever.

1. I say, his pardon is uncertain; because there are some sins which are unpardonable (as I shall show), and they are not all named in particular; and the degrees of malice being uncertain, the salvation of that man is to be wrought with infinite fear and trembling. It was the case of Simon Magus; 'Repent, and ask pardon for thy sin, if peradventure the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee.'* 'If peradventure;' it was a new crime, and concerning its possibility of pardon no revelation had been made, and by analogy to other crimes it was very like an unpardonable sin; for it was 'a thinking a

* Acts viii. 22.

thought' against the Holy Ghost, and that was next to 'speaking a word' against him. Cain's sin was of the same nature: 'It is greater than it can be forgiven:' his passion and his fear were too severe and decretory; it was pardonable, but truly we never find that God did pardon it.

2. But besides this, it is uncertain in the pardon, because it may be the time of pardon is past; and though God hath pardoned to other people the same sins, and to thee too sometimes before, yet, it may be, he will not now: he hath not promised pardon so often as we sin, and in all the returns of impudence, apostasy, and ingratitude; and it may be, 'thy day is past,' as was Jerusalem's in the day that they crucified the Saviour of the world.

3. Pardon of such habitual sins is uncertain, because life is uncertain; and such sins require much time for their abolition and expiation. And therefore, although these sins are not *necessariò mortifera*, that is, unpardonable; yet by consequence they become deadly; because our life may be cut off before we have finished or performed those necessary parts of repentance which are the severe, and yet the only condition of getting pardon. So that you may perceive, that not only every great single crime, but the habit of any sin, is dangerous: and therefore these persons are to be 'snatched from the fire,' if you mean to rescue them: ἐκ τοῦ πυρὸς ἁρπάζοντες. If you stay a day, it may be, you stay too long.

4. To which I add this fourth consideration, that every delay of return is, in the case of habitual sins, an approach to desperation; because the nature of habits is like that of crocodiles, they grow as long as they live; and if they come to obstinacy or confirmation, they are in hell already, and can never return back. For so the Pannonian bears, when they have clasped a dart in the region of their liver, wheel themselves on the wound, and with anger and malicious revenge strike the deadly barb deeper, and cannot be quit from that fatal steel; but, in flying, bear along that which themselves make the instrument of a more hasty death: so is every vicious person struck with a deadly wound, and his own hands force it into the entertainments of the heart; and because it is painful to draw it forth by a sharp and salutary repentance, he still

rolls and turns on his wound, and carries his death in his bowels, where it first entered by choice, and then dwelt by love, and at last shall finish the tragedy by divine judgments and an unalterable decree.

But as the pardon of these sins is uncertain, so the conditions of restitution are hard even to them who shall be pardoned: their pardon, and themselves too, must be fetched from the fire; water will not do it; tears and ineffective sorrow cannot take off a habit or a great crime.

> O nimium faciles, qui tristia crimina cædis
> Tolli fluminea posse putatis aqua!

Bion, seeing a prince weep and tearing his hair for sorrow, asked if baldness would cure his grief. Such pompous sorrows may be good indices, but no perfect instruments of restitution. St. James plainly declares the possibilities of pardon to great sins, in the cases of contention, adultery, lust, and envy, which are the four great indecencies that are most contrary to Christianity:* and in the fifth chapter,† he implies also a possibility of pardon to an habitual sinner, whom he calls τὸν πλανήθέντα ἀπὸ τῆς ὁδοῦ τῆς ἀληθείας, 'one that errs from the truth,' that is, from the life of a Christian, the life of the Spirit of truth: and he adds, that such a person may be reduced, and so be pardoned, though he have sinned long; 'he that converts such a one, shall hide a multitude of sins.' But then the way that he appoints for the restitution of such persons, is humility and humiliation, penances and sharp penitential sorrows, and afflictions, resisting the devil, returning to God, weeping and mourning, confessions and prayers, as you may read at large in the fourth and fifth chapters: and there it is that you shall find it a duty, that such persons should 'be afflicted,' and should 'confess to their brethren:' and these are harder conditions than God requires in the former cases; these are a kind of fiery trial.

I have now done with my text; and should add no more, but that the nature of these sins is such, that they may increase in their weight, and duration, and malice, and then they in-

* Chap. iv. 3. † Ver. ult.

crease in mischief and fatality, and so go beyond the text. Cicero said well, *Ipsa consuetudo assentiendi periculosa esse videtur et lubrica:** "the very custom of consenting in the matters of civility is dangerous and slippery," and will quickly engage us in error: and then we think we are bound to defend them; or else we are made flatterers by it, and so become vicious: and we love our own vices that we are used to, and keep them till they are incurable, that is, till we will never repent of them; and some men resolve never to repent, that is, they resolve they will not be saved, they tread under foot the blood of the everlasting covenant. Those persons are in the fire too, but they will not be pulled out: concerning whom God's prophets must say as once concerning Babylon, *Curavimus, et non est sanata; derelinquamus eam:* 'We would have healed them, but they would not be healed; let us leave them in their sins, and they shall have enough of it.' Only this: those that put themselves out of the condition of mercy, are not to be endured in Christian societies; they deserve it not, and it is not safe that they should be suffered.

But besides all this, I shall name one thing more unto you; for

——— nunquam adeo fœdis adeoque pudendis
Utimur exemplis, ut non pejora supersint.—Juv. viii. 183.

There are some single actions of sin of so great a malice, that in their own nature they are beyond the limit of gospel pardon: they are not such things, for the pardon of which God entered into covenant, because they are such sins which put a man into perfect indispositions and incapacities of entering into or being in the covenant. In the first ages of the world atheism was of that nature, it was against their whole religion; and the sin is worse now, against the whole religion still, and against a brighter light. In the ages after the flood, idolatry was also just such another: for God was known first only as the Creator; then he began to manifest himself in special contracts with men, and he quickly was declared the God of Israel; and idolatry perfectly destroyed all that religion, and therefore

* Acad. Quæst. lib. iv. 68.

was never pardoned intirely, but God did visit it on them that sinned; and when he pardoned it in some degrees, yet he also punished it in some: and yet rebellion against the supreme power of Moses and Aaron was worse; for that also was a perfect destruction of the whole religion, because it refused to submit to those hands, on which God had placed all the religion and all the government. And now, if we would know in the gospel what answers these precedent sins; I answer, first, the same sins acted by a resolute hand and heart are worse now than ever they were: and a third or fourth is also to be added; and that is apostasy, or a voluntary malicious renouncing the faith. The church hath often declared that sin to be unpardonable. Witchcraft, or final impenitence and obstinacy in any sin, are infallibly desperate; and in general, and by a certain parity of reason, whatsoever does destroy charity, or the good life of a Christian, with the same general venom and deletery as apostasy destroys faith: and he that is a renegado from charity, is as unpardonable as he that returns to solemn atheism or infidelity; for all that is directly the sin against the Holy Ghost, that is, a throwing that away whereby only we can be Christians, whereby only we can hope to be saved. To 'speak a word against the Holy Ghost,' in the Pharisees was declared unpardonable, because it was such a word, which, if it had been true or believed, would have destroyed the whole religion; for they said that Christ wrought by Beelzebub, and by consequence did not come from God. He that destroys all the whole order of priesthood, destroys one of the greatest parts of the religion, and one of the greatest effects of the Holy Ghost: he that destroys government, destroys another part. But that we may come nearer to ourselves: to 'quench the Spirit of God' is worse than to speak some words against him; to 'grieve the Spirit of God' is a part of the same impiety; to 'resist the Holy Ghost' is another part: and if we consider that every great sin does this in proportion, it would concern us to be careful lest we fall into 'presumptuous sins, lest they get the dominion over us.' Out of this that I have spoken you may easily gather what sort of men those are, who cannot be 'snatched from the fire;' for whom, as St. John says, 'we are not to pray;' and how near men come to it, that

continue in any known sin. If I should descend to particulars, I might lay a snare to scrupulous and nice consciences. This only: every confirmed habitual sinner does manifest the divine justice in punishing the sins of a short life with a never-dying worm and a never-quenched flame; because he hath an affection to sin, that no time will diminish, but such as would increase to eternal ages; and, accordingly, as any man hath a degree of love, so he hath lodged in his soul a spark, which, unless it be speedily and effectively quenched, will break forth into unquenchable fire.

SUMMARY OF SERMON IX.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVI.—VERSE 26.

PART I.

When God's mercy had decreed to rescue mankind from misery, and so triumphed over his own justice, the excellent wisdom of God resolved to do it in ways contradictory to the appetites and designs of man, that it might also triumph over our weaknesses and imperfect conceptions. Jesus Christ hath preached a new philosophy, and cancelled all the old principles; he hath reduced the appetites of sense to the discourses of reason, and heightened reason to the sublimities of the Spirit; for now sensual pleasures are not delightful; riches are but dross: now if you would enjoy life, you must die; if you would be at ease, you must take up Christ's cross; if you would be rich, you must abound in good works, &c. And therefore he having stated the question so, that either we must quit this world or the other, our affections to this or our interest in that, the choice is rendered easy by the words of the text; because the distance is not less than infinite: the comparison is between heaven and hell, eternity and a moment, &c. *What shall it profit a man?* or *what shall a man give?* Is there any exchange for a man's soul? The question is an αὔξησις of the negative. Nothing can be given as a price to satisfy us for its loss. The blood of the Son of God was given to recover it. When our souls were forfeited to God, nothing less could pay the price to him, who was yet not concerned in the loss, save only as re-

garded his pity: this topic enlarged on. After which it is proposed to consider, first, the propositions of the exchange; the world and a man's soul: secondly, what is likely to be obtained really of the world; and what are really the miseries of a lost soul: thirdly, what considerations may be applied to our practice.

1. First, then, suppose a man gets all the world; what is it that he gets? It is a bubble and a phantasm, and hath no reality beyond a present transient use; a thing that is impossible to be enjoyed, because its fruits and usages are transmitted to us by parts and by succession: this enlarged on.

2. It may be considered, that he who is the greatest possessor in the world, enjoys its best and most noble parts, only in common with inferior persons and the most despicable of his kingdom. The poorest artisan of Rome, walking in Cæsar's gardens, had the same pleasures which they ministered to their lord.

3. Suppose a man lord of all the world, yet since every thing is received, not according to its own greatness and worth, but according to the capacity of the receiver, it signifies very little as to our content. He to whom the world can be given, to any purpose greater than a private estate can minister, must have new capacities created in him: this topic enlarged on.

4. The greatest vanity of this world is remarkable in this; that all its joys summed up together are not big enough to counterpoise the evil of one sharp disease, or to allay a single sorrow; whilst a holy conscience can sweeten the most bitter potion of this world, making tortures and death itself a subject of joy.

5. Suppose a man lord of all this world, a universal monarch: this cannot minister content to him; not that content which a poor contemplative man, by the strength of Christian philosophy, and the support of a very small fortune, daily enjoys. All his power cannot command the sea, or make his

children dutiful and wise: this enlarged on. Imagine a person as blessed as can be supposed with regard to worldly interest; when all his accounts are cast up, he differs nothing from his subjects or servants but in mere circumstance: he has more to wait at his tables, more ceremonies of address, and higher titles; but can a multitude of dishes give him a good appetite? or does not satiety cloy it? this enlarged on.

6. But this supposition hath a lessening term. If a man could be born heir of all the world, it were something; but no man ever was so, except him who enjoyed it least. But in the supposition it is, *If a man could gain the whole world;* which supposes labor and sorrow, trouble and hazard, &c. that besides the possession not being secured to us for a term of life, our lives are almost expired before we become fixed in our purchase: this topic enlarged on.

II. But still all this is only a supposition, like the putting of a case, or a fiction of law. For if we consider how much every man is likely to get really, and how much it is possible for any man to get, we shall find the account far shorter yet, and the purchase most trifling and inconsiderable. For the world is enjoyed at the same time by all its inhabitants, and the same portion of it by several persons in their several capacities. A prince enjoys his whole kingdom, not as all his people enjoy it, but in the manner of a prince; the subject in the manner of subjects: this enlarged on.

2. But consider how far short of the whole world the greatest prince that ever reigned did come. Instance of Alexander the Great. But why talk thus? Every man that loses his soul for the world must not look to have the portion of a king: this enlarged on.

3. Though these premises may suffice to show that the supposed purchase is but vain, yet even the possession of it, whatsoever it be, is not pure and unmixed, but allayed with sorrow and uneasiness: this topic enlarged on.

4. He that enjoys a great portion of this world, hath most commonly the allay of some great cross, which, although God sometimes designs in mercy to wean his affections from worldly things, is yet an inseparable appendant and condition of humanity. We shall generally find him to be most happy that hath most of wisdom and least of the world; because he only hath the least danger and the most security.

5. And, lastly, his soul so gets nothing, that wins all this world, if he loses his soul, that it is ten to one but he that gets the one, shall thereby lose the other: for to a great fortune sin is so adherent and insinuating, that it comes to him in the nature of civility. Its possessor will have no real friends to point out to him the danger of his ways.

We may omit to speak of the habitual intemperance which is too commonly annexed to festive and delicious tables, where there is no other measure and restraint on the appetite, but its fulness and satiety. And although the grace of God is sufficient to great personages and masters of the world, yet it is a mercy mixed with danger. Happy are they who use the world, and abuse it not; who possess a part of it, and love it for no other ends but the necessities of nature, and the discharge of religious and charitable offices. Conclusion.

PART II.

And lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? And now the question is finally stated; and the dispute is concerning the sum of affairs. Therefore when the soul is at stake, and that for its eternal interests, it is not good to be hasty without taking just measures of the exchange. But the nature of the bargain will be better understood, if we consider the soul that is exchanged; what it is in itself; what price the Son of God paid for it; and what it is to lose it.

I. First, if we consider what the soul is in its own capacity

for happiness, we shall find it to be of an excellency greater than the sun, an image of the Divinity, &c. For the Scriptures inform us that *God made man after his own image:* this explained. But the soul is all that whereby we may be, and without which we cannot be happy: this topic enlarged on. The excellency of the soul may be inferred from the consideration, that we ourselves cannot understand how excellently perfect it is; that being the best way of expressing our conceptions of God himself: the means whereby the soul receives pleasure commented on. But the losing a soul is not a mere privation of those felicities, of which the soul is naturally designed to be a partaker, but it is an investing it with contrary objects, and cross effects, and contrary perceptions, &c.

II. Secondly, if we consider the price paid by the Son of God for the redemption of a soul, we shall make a better estimate of it than from the weak discourses of our imperfect philosophy. Not the spoil of rich provinces, not the value of kingdoms, not the price of Cleopatra's draught, nor any thing which was unable to retard for one minute the term of its own natural dissolution, could be a price for the redemption of one perishing soul, &c.

When God made a soul, it was only, *Let us make man*, &c. He spake the word, and it was done. But when man had lost this soul, which the Spirit of God breathed into him, it was not so soon recovered: this enlarged on.

A soul in God's account is valued at the price of the blood, and shame, and tortures of his beloved Son; and yet we throw it away for the exchange of sins that a man is naturally ashamed to own: this topic enlarged on. And all vice is unreasonable; the most splendid temptation being nothing but a well-weaved fallacy, a mere trick, a sophism, and an abuse of the understanding. What an affront then is this to the wisdom of God, thus to undervalue a soul in which our own interest is so concerned, and for which, when lost, he gave the ransom of

his eternal Son! It may be said, that when a soul is so valued, we ought not to venture the loss of it, even to save the world: this explained.

III. But it may be, some natures, or some understandings, care not for all this. We proceed therefore to the third and most material consideration, namely, what it is to lose a soul; which Hierocles thus explains, "An immortal substance can die, not by ceasing to be, but by losing all well-being," or by becoming miserable; which agrees with the caution given us by our Saviour, *not to fear them that can kill the body only, but him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell;* which word signifies, not death, but tortures.

Some brief explication of the terms used in Scripture to represent to our understandings the greatness of this perishing: *hell-fire, brimstone and fire;* that which our Saviour calls *the outer darkness;* where, because God's justice rules alone, without the allays and sweet abatements of mercy, there shall be pure and unmingled misery, beyond all those expressions which the tortures of this world could furnish to the sacred writers.

This consideration represented in that expression of our blessed Saviour, which he took out of the prophet Isaiah, *where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.* This quotation commented on, and illustrated from Isaiah xxxiv. 8, &c.; where the prophet prophesies of the great destruction of Jerusalem for all her iniquities. *It is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Sion, &c.*

Comment on the words *for ever,—everlasting,—eternal,—the never-dying worm,—the fire unquenchable.* Being words borrowed by our Saviour and his Apostles from the Old Testament, they must have a signification proportionable to the state in which they have their signification; so that as this worm, when it signifies a temporal infliction, means a worm that never

ceases giving torment till the body is consumed; when it is translated to an immortal state, it must signify as much in that proportion: this subject carried on.

Even if Origen's opinion were true, and accursed souls were to have a period to their tortures after a thousand years, would it not be madness to choose the pleasures of a few years here, with trouble, danger, uncertainty, labor, and the intervals of sickness; and this to endure the flames of hell for a thousand years together? If a man were condemned to lie still, or to lie in bed in one posture for seven years together, would he not buy it off with his whole estate? But what is this to the minutes, years, and ages of eternity, where there is no hope? for hell could not be hell if there were hope.

And though the Scripture uses the word *fire* to express the torments of accursed souls, yet fire can no more equal the pangs of hell, than it can torment an immaterial substance: for they are to suffer the wrath of God, *who is a consuming fire:* and when God takes away all comfort from us, nothing to support our spirit is left; sorrow is our food, and tears our drink, &c. We may guess at this misery of losing our soul by the terrors of a guilty conscience, those terrible thorns of the soul: this topic dilated on.

Exhortation, that we take care, lest, for the purchase of a little trifling portion of this world, we come into this state of torment. Let us not have such a hardiness against the threats and representations of divine vengeance. Way in which different men deceive themselves; some by taking up atheistical opinions,—others, by supposing that God is all mercy, forgetting his justice, and putting off all repentance to the last hours of life, &c.

Our youth, and manhood, and old age, are all of them due to God; and justice and mercy are to him equally essential. We should remember the fatal and decretory sentence which God hath passed on all mankind: *It is appointed to all men once*

to die, and after death comes judgment. And if any of us were certain to die next morning, with what earnestness should we pray! with what hatred should we remember our sins! with what scorn should we look on the licentious pleasures of the world! This topic enlarged on. He therefore is a great fool that heaps up riches; that greedily pursues the world; and at the same time *heaps up wrath to himself against the day of wrath.* Conclusion.

SERMON IX.

THE FOOLISH EXCHANGE.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVI.—VERSE 26.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

PART I.

When the eternal mercy of God had decreed to rescue mankind from misery and infelicity, and so triumphed over his own justice; the excellent wisdom of God resolved to do it in ways contradictory to the appetites and designs of man, that it also might triumph over our weaknesses and imperfect conceptions. So God decreed to glorify his mercy by curing our sins, and to exalt his wisdom by the reproof of our ignorance, and the representing on what weak and false principles we had built our hopes and expectations of felicity; pleasure and profit, victory over our enemies, riches and pompous honors, power and revenge, desires according to sensual appetites, and prosecutions violent and passionate of those appetites, health and long life, free from trouble, without poverty or persecution.

> Vitam quæ faciunt beatiorem,
> Jucundissime Martialis, hæc sunt.—Mart. x. 47.

These are the measures of good and evil, the object of our hopes and fears, the securing our content, and the portion of this world; and for the other, let it be as it may. But the

blessed Jesus,—having made revelations of an immortal duration, of another world, and of a strange restitution to it, even by the resurrection of the body, and a new investiture of the soul with the same upper garment, clarified and made pure, so as no fuller on earth can whiten it;—hath also preached a new philosophy, hath cancelled all the old principles, reduced the appetites of sense to the discourses of reason, and heightened reason to the sublimities of the Spirit, teaching us abstractions and immaterial conceptions, giving us new eyes, and new objects, and new proportions: for now sensual pleasures are not delightful, riches are dross, honors are nothing but the appendages of virtue, and in relation to it are to receive their account. But now if you would enjoy life, you must die; if you would be at ease, you must take up Christ's cross, and conform to his sufferings; if you would 'save your life,' you must 'lose it;' and if you would be rich, you must abound in good works, you must be 'poor in spirit,' and despise the world, and be rich unto God: for whatsoever is contrary to the purchases and affections of this world, is an endearment of our hopes in the world to come. And, therefore, he having stated the question so, that either we must quit this world or the other; our affections, I mean, and adherences to this, or our interest and hopes of the other; the choice is rendered very easy by the words of my text, because the distance is not less than infinite, and the comparison hath terms of a vast difference; heaven and hell, eternity and a moment, vanity and real felicity, life and death eternal, all that can be hoped for and all that can be feared; these are the terms of our choice: and if a man have his wits about him, and be not drunk with sensuality and senselessness, he need not much to dispute before he pass the sentence. For nothing can be given to us to recompense the loss of heaven; and if our souls be lost, there is nothing remaining to us whereby we can be happy.

'What shall it profit a man?' or, 'What shall a man give?' Is there any exchange for a man's soul? The question is an αὔξησις of the negative. Nothing can be given for an ἀντάλλαγμα, or 'a price,' to satisfy for its loss.

The blood of the Son of God was given to recover it, or as an ἀντάλλαγμα to God; and when our souls were forfeit to

him, nothing less than the life and passion of God and man could pay the price, I say, to God; who yet was not concerned in the loss, save only that such was his goodness, that it pitied him to see his creature lost. But to us what shall be the ἀντάλλαγμα? what can make us recompense, when we have lost our own souls, and are lost in a miserable eternity? What can then recompense us? Not all the world, not ten thousand worlds: and of this that miserable man whose soul is lost, is the best judge. For the question is ἀδυνητικὸν, and hath a potential signification, and means πόσα ἂν δώσῃ· that is, Suppose a man ready to die, condemned to the sentence of a horrid death, heightened with the circumstances of trembling and amazement, 'what would he give' to save his life? 'Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, and all that a man hath, will he give for his life.' And this turned to a proverb among the Jews; for so the last words of the text are, τί δώσει ἄνθρωπος ἀντάλλαγμα τῆς ψυχῆς; which proverb being usually meant concerning a temporal death, and intended to represent the sadnesses of a condemned person, our blessed Saviour fits to his own purpose, and translates to the signification of death eternal, which he first revealed clearly to the world. And because no interest of the world can make a man recompense for his life, because to lose that makes him incapable of enjoying the exchange, (and he were a strange fool, who, having no design on immortality or virtue, should be willing to be hanged for a thousand pounds per annum,) this argument increases infinitely in the purpose of our blessed Saviour; and to gain the world, and to lose our souls, in the Christian sense, is infinitely more madness, and a worse exchange, than when our souls signify nothing but a temporal life. And although possibly the indefinite hopes of Elysium, or an honorable name, might tempt some hardy persons to leave this world, hoping for a better condition, even among the heathens; yet no excuse will acquit a Christian from madness, if, for the purchase of this world, he lose his eternity.

Here, then, first, we will consider the propositions of the exchange, the 'world and a man's soul,' by way of supposition, supposing all that is propounded were obtained, 'the whole world.' Secondly, we will consider, what is likely to be

obtained really, and indeed, of the world, and what are really the miseries of a lost soul: for it is propounded in the text, by way of supposition, 'if a man should gain the world,' which no man ever did nor ever can; and he that gets most, gets too little to be exchanged for a temporal life. And, thirdly, I shall apply it to your practice, and make material considerations.

1. First, then, suppose a man gets all the world, what is it that he gets? It is a bubble and a phantasm, and hath no reality beyond a present transient use; a thing that is impossible to be enjoyed, because its fruits and usages are transmitted to us by parts and by succession. He that hath all the world, (if we can suppose such a man) cannot have a dish of fresh summer-fruits in the midst of winter, not so much as a green fig: and very much of its possessions is so hid, so fugacious, and of so uncertain purchase, that it is like the riches of the sea to the lord of the shore; all the fish and wealth within all its hollowness are his, but he is never the better for what he cannot get: all the shell-fishes that produce pearl, produce them not for him; and the bowels of the earth shall hide her treasures in undiscovered retirements: so that it will signify as much to this great purchaser to be entitled to an inheritance in the upper region of the air; he is so far from possessing all its riches, that he does not so much as know of them, nor understand the philosophy of her minerals.

2. I consider, that he that is the greatest possessor in the world, enjoys its best and most noble parts, and those which are of most excellent perfection, but in common with the inferior persons, and the most despicable of his kingdom. Can the greatest prince inclose the sun, and set one little star in his cabinet for his own use, or secure to himself the gentle and benign influences of any one constellation? Are not his subjects' fields bedewed with the same showers that water his gardens of pleasure?

Nay, those things which he esteems his ornament, and the singularity of his possessions, are they not of more use to others than to himself? For suppose his garments splendid and shining, like the robe of a cherub, or the clothing of the fields; all that he that wears them enjoys, is, that they keep him

warm, and clean, and modest; and all this is done by clean and less pompous vestments; and the beauty of them, which distinguishes him from others, is made to please the eyes of the beholders; and he is like a fair bird, or the meretricious painting of a wanton woman, made wholly to be looked on, that is, to be enjoyed by every one but himself: and the fairest face and the sparkling eye cannot perceive or enjoy their own beauties but by reflection. It is I that am pleased with beholding his gaiety; and the gay man, in his greatest bravery, is only pleased because I am pleased with the sight; so borrowing his little and imaginary complacency from the delight that I have, not from any inherency of his own possession.

The poorest artisan of Rome, walking in Cæsar's gardens, had the same pleasures which they ministered to their lord: and although it may be, he was put to gather fruits to eat from another place, yet his other senses were delighted equally with Cæsar's: the birds made him as good music, the flowers gave him as sweet smells; he there sucked as good air, and delighted in the beauty and order of the place, for the same reason and on the same perception as the prince himself; save only that Cæsar paid, for all that pleasure, vast sums of money, the blood and treasure of a province, which the poor man had for nothing.

3. Suppose a man lord of all the world (for still we are but in supposition); yet, since every thing is received, not according to its own greatness and worth, but according to the capacity of the receiver, it signifies very little as to our content or to the riches of our possession. If any man should give to a lion a fair meadow full of hay, or a thousand quince trees; or should give to the goodly bull, the master and the fairest of the whole herd, a thousand fair stags; if a man should present to a child a ship laden with Persian carpets, and the ingredients of the rich scarlet; all these, being disproportionate either to the appetite or to the understanding, could add nothing of content, and might declare the freeness of the presenter, but they upbraid the incapacity of the receiver. And so it does if God should give the whole world to any man. He knows not what to do with it; he can use no more but according to the capacities of a man; he can use nothing but meat, and

drink, and clothes; and infinite riches, that can give him changes of raiment every day and a full table, do but give him a clean trencher every bit he eats; it signifies no more but wantonness and variety, to the same, not to any new purposes. He to whom the world can be given to any purpose greater than a private estate can minister, must have new capacities created in him: he needs the understanding of an angel, to take the accounts of his estate; he had need have a stomach like fire or the grave, for else he can eat no more than one of his healthful subjects; and unless he hath an eye like the sun, and a motion like that of a thought, and a bulk as big as one of the orbs of heaven, the pleasures of his eye can be no greater than to behold the beauty of a little prospect from a hill, or to look on the heap of gold packed up in a little room, or to dote on a cabinet of jewels, better than which there is no man that sees at all, but sees every day. For, not to name the beauties and sparkling diamonds of heaven, a man's, or a woman's, or a hawk's eye, is more beauteous and excellent than all the jewels of his crown. And when we remember that a beast, who hath quicker senses than a man, yet hath not so great delight in the fruition of any object, because he wants understanding and the power to make reflex acts on his perception; it will follow, that understanding and knowlege is the greatest instrument of pleasure, and he that is most knowing, hath a capacity to become happy, which a less knowing prince, or a rich person, hath not; and in this only a man's capacity is capable of enlargement. But then, although they only have power to relish any pleasure rightly, who rightly understand the nature, and degrees, and essences, and ends of things; yet they that do so, understand also the vanity and the unsatisfyingness of the things of this world, so that the relish, which could not be great in a great understanding, appears contemptible, because its vanity appears at the same time: the understanding sees all, and sees through it.

4. The greatest vanity of this world is remarkable in this, that all its joys summed up together are not big enough to counterpoise the evil of one sharp disease, or to allay a sorrow. For imagine a man great in his dominion as Cyrus, rich as Solomon, victorious as David, beloved like Titus, learned as Tris-

megist, powerful as all the Roman greatness; all this, and the results of all this, give him no more pleasure, in the midst of a fever or the tortures of the stone, than if he were only lord of a little dish, and a dishful of fountain water. Indeed the excellency of a holy conscience is a comfort and a magazine of joy, so great, that it sweetens the most bitter potion of the world, and makes tortures and death, not only tolerable, but amiable; and, therefore, to part with this, whose excellency is so great, for the world, that is of so inconsiderable a worth, as not to have in it recompense enough for the sorrows of a sharp disease, is a bargain fit to be made by none but fools and madmen. Antiochus Epiphanes, and Herod the Great, and his grandchild, Agrippa, were sad instances of this great truth: to every of which it happened, that the grandeur of their fortune, the greatness of their possessions, and the increase of their estate, disappeared and expired like camphire, at their arrest by those several sharp diseases, which covered their heads with cypress, and hid their crowns in an inglorious grave.

For what can all the world minister to a sick person, if it represents all the spoils of nature, and the choicest delicacies of land and sea? Alas! his appetite is lost, and to see a pebble-stone is more pleasing to him: for he can look on that without loathing, but not so on the most delicious fare that ever made famous the Roman luxury. Perfumes make his head ache; if you load him with jewels, you press him with a burden as troublesome as his grave-stone: and what pleasure is in all those possessions that cannot make his pillow easy, nor tame the rebellion of a tumultuous humor, nor restore the use of a withered hand, or straighten a crooked finger? Vain is the hope of that man, whose soul rests on vanity and such unprofitable possessions.

5. Suppose a man lord of all this world, a universal monarch, as some princes have lately designed; all that cannot minister content to him; not that content which a poor contemplative man, by the strength of Christian philosophy, and the support of a very small fortune, daily does enjoy. All his power and greatness cannot command the sea to overflow his shores, or to stay from retiring to the opposite strand: it cannot make his children dutiful or wise. And though the world admired at the

greatness of Philip the Second's fortune, in the accession of Portugal and the East Indies to his principalities, yet this could not allay the infelicity of his family, and the unhandsomeness of his condition, in having a proud, and indiscreet, and a vicious young prince, likely to inherit all his greatness. And if nothing appears in the face of such a fortune to tell all the world that it is spotted and imperfect; yet there is, in all conditions of the world, such weariness and tediousness of the spirits, that a man is ever more pleased with hopes of going off from the present, than in dwelling on that condition, which, it may be, others admire and think beauteous, but none knoweth the smart of it but he that drank off the little pleasure, and felt the ill relish of the appendage. How many kings have groaned under the burden of their crowns, and have sunk down and died! How many have quitted their pompous cares, and retired into private lives, there to enjoy the pleasures of philosophy and religion, which their thrones denied!

And if we consider the supposition of the text, the thing will demonstrate itself. For he who can be supposed the owner and purchaser of the whole world, must either be a king or a private person. A private person can hardly be supposed to be the man; for if he be subject to another, how can he be lord of the whole world? But if he be a king, it is certain that his cares are greater than any man's, his fears are bigger, his evils mountainous, the accidents that discompose him are more frequent, and sometimes intolerable; and of all his great possessions he hath not the greatest use and benefit; but they are like a great harvest, which more laborers must bring in, and more must eat of; only he is the centre of all the cares, and they fix on him, but the profits run out to all the lines of the circle, to all that are about him, whose good is therefore greater than the good of the prince, because what they enjoy is the purchase of the prince's care; and so they feed on his cost.

Privatusque magis vivam te rege beatus.*

Servants live the best lives, for their care is single, only how to please their lord; but all the burden of a troublesome providence and ministration makes the outside pompous and more

* Horat. Sat. i. 3. 142.

full of ceremony, but intricates the condition and disturbs the quiet of the great possessor.

And imagine a person as blest as can be supposed on the stock of worldly interest; when all his accounts are cast up, he differs nothing from his subjects or his servants but in mere circumstance, nothing of reality or substance. He hath more to wait at his tables, or persons of higher rank to do the meanest offices; more ceremonies of address, a fairer escutcheon, louder titles; but can this multitude of dishes make him have a good stomach, or does not satiety cloy it? when his high diet is such that he is not capable of being feasted, and knows not the frequent delights and oftener possibilities a poor man hath of being refreshed, while not only his labor makes hunger, and so makes his meat delicate (and then it cannot be ill fare, let it be what it will); but also his provision is such, that every little addition is a direct feast to him; while the greatest owner of the world, giving to himself the utmost of his desires, hath nothing left beyond his ordinary, to become the entertainment of his festival days, but more loads of the same meat.* And then let him consider how much of felicity can this condition contribute to him, in which he is not farther gone beyond a person of a little fortune in the greatness of his possession, than he is fallen short in the pleasures and possibility of their enjoyment.

And that is a sad condition, when, like Midas, all that the man touches shall turn to gold: and his is no better, to whom a perpetual full table, not recreated with fasting, not made pleasant with intervening scarcity, ministers no more good than a heap of gold does; that is, he hath no benefit of it, save the beholding of it with his eyes. Cannot a man quench his thirst as well out of an urn or chalice as out of a whole river? It is an ambitious thirst, and a pride of draught, that had rather lay his mouth to Euphrates than to a petty goblet; but if he had rather, it adds not so much to his content as to his danger and his vanity.

——— eo fit,
Plenior ut si quos delectet copia justo,
Cum ripa simul avulsos ferat Aufidus acer.
Hor. Sat. i. 1. 56.

* Rare volte ha fame chista sempre à tavola.

For so I have heard of persons whom the river hath swept away, together with the turf they pressed, when they stooped to drown their pride rather than their thirst.

6. But this supposition hath a lessening term. If a man could be born heir of all the world, it were something; but no man ever was so, except him only who enjoyed the least of it, the Son of Man, that 'had not where to lay his head.' But in the supposition it is, 'If a man could gain the whole world,' which supposes labor and sorrow, trouble and expense, venture and hazard, and so much time expired in its acquist and purchase, that, besides the possession is not secured to us for a term of life, so our lives are almost expired before we become estated in our purchases. And, indeed, it is a sad thing to see an ambitious or a covetous person make his life unpleasant, troublesome, and vexatious, to grasp a power bigger than himself, to fight for it with infinite hazards of his life, so that is a thousand to one but he perishes in the attempt, and gets nothing at all but an untimely grave, a reproachful memory, and an early damnation. But suppose he gets a victory, and that the unhappy party is put to begin a new game; then to see the fears, the watchfulness, the diligence, the laborious arts to secure a possession, lest the desperate party should recover a desperate game. And suppose this, with a new stock of labors, danger, and expense, be seconded by a new success; then to look on the new emergencies, and troubles, and discontents, among his friends, about parting the spoil; the envies, the jealousies, the slanders, the underminings, and the perpetual insecurity of his condition: all this, I say, is to see a man take infinite pains to make himself miserable. But if he will be so unlearned as to call this gallantry or a splendid fortune; yet, by this time, when he remembers he hath certainly spent much of his time in trouble, and how long he shall enjoy this he is still uncertain; he is not certain of a month; and suppose it be seven years, yet when he comes to die, and cast up his accounts, and shall find nothing remaining but a sad remembrance of evils and troubles past, and expectations of worse, infinitely worse, he must acknowlege himself convinced, that to gain all this world is a fortune not worth the labor and the dangers, the fears and trans-

portations of passions, though the soul's loss be not considered in the bargain.

II. But I told you all this while that this is but a supposition still, the putting of a case or like a fiction of law; nothing real. For if we consider, in the second place, how much every man is likely to get really, and how much it is possible for any man to get, we shall find the account far shorter yet, and the purchase most trifling and inconsiderable. For, first, the world is at the same time enjoyed by all its inhabitants, and the same portion of it by several persons in their several capacities. A prince enjoys his whole kingdom, not as all his people enjoy it, but in the manner of a prince; the subject in the manner of subjects. The prince hath certain regalia beyond the rest; but the feudal right of subjects does them more emolument, and the regalia does the prince more honor: and those that hold the fees in subordinate right, transmit also it to their tenants, beneficiaries, and dependents, to public uses, to charity, and hospitality; all which is a lessening of the lord's possessions, and a cutting his river into little streams, not that himself alone, but that all his relatives may drink to be refreshed. Thus the well where the woman of Samaria sat, was Jacob's well, and he drank of it; but so did his wives, and his children, and his cattle. So that what we call ours, is really ours but for our portion of expense and use; we have so little of it, that our servants have far more; and that which is ours, is nothing but the title, and the care, and the trouble of securing and dispensing; save only that God, whose stewards we all are, will call such owners (as they are pleased to call themselves) to strict accounts for their disbursements. And by this account, the possession or dominion is but a word, and serves a fancy, or a passion, or a vice, but no real end of nature. It is the use and spending it that makes a man, to all real purposes of nature, to be the owner of it; and in this the lord and master hath but a share.

2. But, secondly, consider how far short of the whole world the greatest prince that ever reigned did come. Alexander, that wept because he had no more worlds to conquer, was, in his knowlege, deceived and brutish as in his passion: he overran much of Asia; but he could never pass the Ganges, and

never thrust his sword in the bowels of Europe, and knew nothing of America. And the *οἰκουμένη*, or 'the whole world,' began to have an appropriate sense; and was rather put to the Roman greatness, as an honorable appellative, than did signify that they were lords of the world, who never went beyond Persia, Egypt, or Britain.

But why do I talk of great things in this question of the exchange of the soul for the world? Because it is a real bargain which many men (too many, God knows) do make, we must consider it as applicable to practice. Every man that loses his soul for the purchase of the world, must not look to have the portion of a king. How few men are princes; and of those that are not born so, how seldom instances are found in story of persons, that, by their industry, became so! But we must come far lower yet. Thousands there are that damn themselves; and yet their purchase, at long-running, and after a base and weary life spent, is but five hundred pounds a year: nay, it may be, they only cozen an easy person out of a good estate, and pay for it at an easy rate, which they obtain by lying, by drinking, by flattery, by force; and the gain is nothing but a thousand pound in the whole, or, it may be, nothing but a convenience. Nay, how many men hazard their salvation for an acre of ground, for twenty pound, to please a master, to get a small and a kind usage from a superior! These men get but little, though they did not give so much for it; so little, that Epictetus thought the purchase dear enough, though you paid nothing for it but flattery and observance: *Οὐ προσεκλήθης ἐφ' ἑστίασίν τινος; οὐ γὰρ ἔδωκας τῷ καλοῦντι πόσου πωλεῖ τὸ δεῖπνον· ἐπαίνου δ' αὐτὸ πωλεῖ, θεραπείας πωλεῖ·** "Observance was the price of his meal;" and he paid too dear for one that gave his birthright for it; but he that exchanges his soul for it, knows not the vanity of his purchase nor the value of his loss. He that gains the purchase and spoil of a kingdom, hath got that, which, to all that are placed in heaven, or to a man that were seated in the paths of the sun, seems but like a spot in an eye, or a mathematical point, so without vastness, that it seems to be without dimensions. But he whose purchase is but his

* Enc. c. 32.

neighbor's field, or a few unjust acres, hath got that which is inconsiderable, below the notice and description of the map: for by such hieroglyphical representments, Socrates chid the vanity of a proud Athenian.

3. Although these premises may suffice to show that the supposed purchase is but vain, and that all which men use really to obtain, is less than trifles; yet even the possession of it, whatsoever it be, is not mere and unmixed, but allayed with sorrow and uneasiness; the gain hath but enlarged his appetite, and, like a draught to an hydropic person, hath enraged his thirst; and still that which he hath not is infinitely bigger than what he hath, since the first enlargement of his purchase was not to satisfy necessity, but his passion, his lust or his avarice, his pride or his revenge. These things cease not by their fuel; but their flames grow bigger, and the capacities are stretched, and they want more than they did at first. For who wants most, he that wants five pounds, or he that wants five thousand? And supposing a man naturally supported and provided for, in the dispensations of nature there is no difference, but that the poor hath enough to fill his belly, and the rich man can never have enough to fill his eye. The poor man's wants are no greater than what may be supplied by charity; and the rich man's wants are so big that none but princes can relieve them; and they are left to all the temptations of great vices and huge cares to make their reparations.

> Dives eget gemmis, Cereali munere pauper;
> Sed cum egeant ambo, pauper egens minus est.*

If the greatness of the world's possessions produce such fruits, vexation, and care, and want; the ambitious requiring of great estates is but like the selling of a fountain to buy a fever, a parting with content to buy necessity, and the purchase of an unhandsome condition at the price of infelicity.

4. He that enjoys a great portion of this world, hath most commonly the allay of some great cross, which, although sometimes God designs in mercy, to wean his affections from the world, and for the abstracting them from sordid adherences

* Auson. Epig. cxxxiv. 3.

and cohabitation, to make his eyes like stars, to fix them in the orbs of heaven and the regions of felicity, yet they are an inseparable appendant and condition of humanity. Solomon observed the vanity of some persons, that heaped up great riches for their heirs, and yet 'knew not whether a wise man or a fool should possess them; this is a great evil under the sun.' And if we observe the great crosses many times God permits in great families, as discontent in marriages, artificial or natural bastardies, a society of man and wife like the conjunction of two politics, full of state, and ceremony, and design, but empty of those sweet caresses, and natural hearty complications and endearments, usual in meaner and innocent persons; the perpetual sickness, fulness of diet, fear of dying, the abuse of flatterers, the trouble and noise of company, the tedious officiousness of impertinent and ceremonious visits, the declension of estate, the sadness of spirit, the notoriousness of those dishonors which the meanness of lower persons conceals, but their eminency makes as visible as the spots in the moon's face; we shall find him to be most happy that hath most of wisdom and least of the world, because he only hath the least danger and the most security.

5. And lastly, his soul so gets nothing that wins all this world, if he loses his soul, that it is ten to one but he that gets the one, therefore shall lose the other; for to a great and opulent fortune, sin is so adherent and insinuating, that it comes to him in the nature of civility. It is a sad sight to see a great personage undertake an action passionately and on great interest; and let him manage it as indiscreetly, let the whole design be unjust, let it be acted with all the malice and impotency in the world, he shall have enow to tell him that he proceeds wisely enough, to be servants of his interest, and promoters of his sin, instruments of his malice, and actors of his revenge. But which of all his relatives shall dare to tell him of his indiscretion, of his rage, and of his folly? He had need be a bold man and a severe person that shall tell him of his danger, and that he is in a direct progress towards hell. And indeed such personages have been so long nourished up in softness, flattery, and effeminacy, that too often themselves are impatient of a monitor, and think the charity and duty of a

modest reprehension to be a rudeness and incivility. That prince is a wise man that loves to have it otherwise; and, certainly, it is a strange civility and dutifulness in friends and relatives, to suffer him to go to hell uncontrolled, rather than to seem unmannerly towards a great sinner. But, certainly, this is none of the least infelicities of them who are lords of the world, and masters of great possessions.

I omit to speak of the habitual intemperance which is too commonly annexed to festival and delicious tables, where there is no other measure or restraint on the appetite, but its fulness and satiety, and when it cannot or dare not eat more. Oftentimes it happens, that the intemperance of a poor table is more temperate and hath less of luxury in it than the temperance of a rich. To this are consequent all the evil accidents and effects of fulness, pride, lust, wantonness, softnesses of disposition, and dissolution of manners, huge talking, imperiousness, despite and contempt of poor persons; and, at the best, it is a great temptation for a man to have in his power whatsoever he can have in his sensual desires. Who then shall check his voracity, or calm his revenge, or allay his pride, or mortify his lust, or humble his spirit? It is like as when a lustful young and tempted person lives perpetually with his amorous and delicious mistress: if he escapes burning that is inflamed from within and set on fire from without, it is a greater miracle than the escaping from the flames of the furnace by the three children of the captivity. And just such a thing is the possession of the world; it furnishes us with abilities to sin and opportunities of ruin, and it makes us to dwell with poisons, and dangers, and enemies.

And although the grace of God is sufficient to great personages and masters of the world, and that it is possible for a young man to be tied on a bed of flowers, and fastened by the arms and band of a courtesan, and tempted wantonly, and yet to escape the danger and the crime, and to triumph gloriously; (for so St. Jerome reports of a son of the king of Nicomedia) and riches and a free fortune are designed by God to be a mercy, and an opportunity of doing noble things, and excellent charity, and exact justice, and to protect innocence, and to defend oppressed people: yet it is a mercy mixed with much danger; yea, it is like the present of a whole vintage to a man

in a hectic fever; he will be shrewdly tempted to drink of it, and, if he does, he is inflamed, and may chance to die with the kindness. Happy are those persons who use the world, and abuse it not; who possess a part of it, and love it for no other ends but for necessities of nature, and conveniences of person, and discharge of all their duty and the offices of religion, and charity to Christ and all Christ's members. But since he that hath all the world cannot command nature to do him one office extraordinary, and enjoys the best part but in common with the poorest man in the world, and can use no more of it but according to a limited and a very narrow capacity; and whatsoever he can use or possess, cannot outweigh the present pressure of a sharp disease, nor can it at all give him content, without which there can be nothing of felicity; since a prince, in the matter of using the world, differs nothing from his subjects, but in mere accidents and circumstances, and yet these very many trifling differences are not to be obtained but by so much labor and care, so great expense of time and trouble, that the possession will not pay thus much of the price; and, after all this, the man may die two hours after he hath made his troublesome and expensive purchase, and is certain not to enjoy it long: add to this last, that most men get so little of the world, that it is altogether of a trifling and inconsiderable interest; that they who have the most of this world, have the most of that but in title and in supreme rights and reserved privileges, the real use descending on others to more substantial purposes; that the possession of this trifle is mixed with sorrow on other accidents, and is allayed with fear; and that the greatness of men's possessions increases their thirst, and enlarges their wants, by swelling their capacity; and, above all, is of so great danger to a man's virtue, that a great fortune and a very great virtue are not always observed to grow together:—he that observes all this, (and much more he may observe) will see that he that gains the whole world, hath made no such great bargain of it, although he had it for nothing but the necessary unavoidable troubles in getting it. But how great a folly is it to buy so great a trouble, so great a vanity, with the loss of our precious souls, remains to be considered in the following parts of the text.

SERMON IX.

PART II.

'AND lose his own soul? or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?'—And now the question is finally stated, and the dispute is concerning the sum of affairs.

De morte hominis nulla est cunctatio longa.*

And, therefore, when the soul is at a stake, not for its temporal, but for its eternal interest, it is not good to be hasty in determining, without taking just measures of the exchange. Solomon had the good things of the world actually in possession; and he tried them at the touchstone of prudence and natural value, and found them allayed with vanity and imperfection; and we that see them 'weighed in the balance of the sanctuary,' and tried by the touchstone of the Spirit, find them not only light and unprofitable, but pungent and dolorous. But now we are to consider what it is that men part with and lose, when, with passion and impotency, they get the world; and that will present the bargain to be a huge infelicity. And this I observe to be intimated in the word, 'lose.' For he that gives gold for cloth, or precious stones for bread, serves his needs of nature, and loses nothing by it; and the merchant that found a pearl of great price, and sold all that he had to make the purchase of it, made a good venture; he was no loser: but here the case is otherwise; when a man gains the whole world, and his soul goes in the exchange, he hath not done like a merchant, but like a child or prodigal; he hath given himself away, he hath lost all that can distinguish him from a slave or a miserable person, he loses his soul in the exchange. For the soul of a man all the world cannot be a just price; a man may lose it, or throw it away, but he can never make a good exchange when he parts with this jewel: and, therefore, our blessed Saviour rarely well expresses it by ἐζημιοῦν, which is

* Juv. vi. 221.

fully opposed to κέρδος, 'gain:' it is such an ill market a man makes, as if he should proclaim his riches and goods vendible for a garland of thistles decked and trimmed up with the stinking poppy.

But we shall better understand the nature of this bargain if we consider the soul that is exchanged; what it is in itself, in order, not of nature, but to felicity and the capacities of joy; secondly, what price the Son of God paid for it; and, thirdly, what it is to lose it; that is, what miseries and tortures are signified by losing a soul.

I. First, if we consider what the soul is in its own capacity to happiness, we shall find it to be an excellency greater than the sun, of an angelical substance, sister to a cherubim, an image of the Divinity, and the great argument of that mercy whereby God did distinguish us from the lower form of beasts, and trees, and minerals.

For, so it was, the Scripture affirms that 'God made man after his own image,' that is, *secundum illam imaginem et ideam quam concepit ipse;* not according to the likeness of any of those creatures which were pre-existent to man's production, not according to any of those images or ideas whereby God created the heavens and the earth, but by a new form, to distinguish him from all other substances; "he made him by a new idea of his own," by an uncreated exemplar. And besides, that this was a donation of intelligent faculties, such as we understand to be perfect and essential, or rather the essence of God, it is also a designation of him to a glorious immortality, and communication of the rays and reflections of his own essential felicities.

But the soul is all that whereby we may be, and without which we cannot be, happy. It is not the eye that sees the beauties of the heaven, nor the ear that hears the sweetness of music, or the glad tidings of a prosperous accident; but the soul that perceives all the relishes of sensual and intellectual perfections; and the more noble and excellent the soul is, the greater and more savory are its perceptions. And, if a child beholds the rich ermine, or the diamonds of a starry night, or the order of the world, or hears the discourses of an Apostle; because he makes no reflex acts on himself, and sees not that

he sees, he can have but the pleasure of a fool, or the deliciousness of a mule. But, although the reflection of its own acts be a rare instrument of pleasure or pain respectively, yet the soul's excellency is, on the same reason, not perceived by us, by which the sapidness of pleasant things of nature are not understood by a child; even because the soul cannot reflect far enough. For as the sun, which is the fountain of light and heat, makes violent and direct emissions of his rays from himself, but reflects them no farther than to the bottom of a cloud, or the lowest imaginary circle of the middle region, and, therefore, receives not a duplicate of his own heat; so is the soul of man; it reflects on its own inferior actions of particular sense, or general understanding; but, because it knows little of its own nature, the manners of volition, the immediate instruments of understanding, the way how it comes to meditate; and cannot discern how a sudden thought arrives, or the solution of a doubt not depending on preceding premises; therefore, above half its pleasures are abated, and its own worth less understood; and, possibly, it is the better it is so. If the elephant knew his strength, or the horse the vigorousness of his own spirit, they would be as rebellious against their rules as unreasonable men against government; nay, the angels themselves, because their light reflected home to their orbs, and they understood all the secrets of their own perfection, they grew vertiginous, and fell from the battlements of heaven. But the excellency of a human soul shall then be truly understood, when the reflection will make no distraction of our faculties, nor enkindle any irregular fires; when we may understand ourselves without danger.

In the mean this consideration is gone high enough, when we understand the soul of a man to be so excellently perfect, that we cannot understand how excellently perfect it is; that being the best way of expressing our conceptions of God himself. And, therefore, I shall not need by distinct discourses to represent that the will of man is the last resort and sanctuary of true pleasure, which, in its formality, can be nothing else but a conformity of possession or of being to the will; that the understanding, being the channel and conveyance of the noblest perceptions, feeds on pleasures in all its proportionate

acts, and unless it be disturbed by intervening sins and remembrances derived hence, keeps a perpetual festival; that the passions are every of them fitted with an object, in which they rest as in their centre; that they have such delight in these their proper objects, that too often they venture a damnation rather than quit their interest and possession. But yet from these considerations it would follow, that to lose a soul, which is designed to be an immense sea of pleasure, even in its natural capacities, is to lose all that whereby a man can possibly be, or be supposed, happy. And so much the rather is this understood to be an insupportable calamity, because losing a soul in this sense is not a mere privation of those felicities, of which a soul is naturally designed to be a partaker, but it is an investing it with contrary objects, and cross effects, and dolorous perceptions: for the will, if it misses its desires, is afflicted; and the understanding, when it ceases to be ennobled with excellent things, is made ignorant as a swine, dull as the foot of a rock; and the affections are in the destitution of their perfective actions made tumultuous, vexed and discomposed to the height of rage and violence. But this is but the ἀρχὴ ὠδίνων, "the beginning of those throes," which end not but in eternal infelicity.

II. Secondly, if we consider the price that the Son of God paid for the redemption of a soul, we shall better estimate of it, than from the weak discourses of our imperfect and unlearned philosophy. Not the spoil of rich provinces, not the estimate of kingdoms, not the price of Cleopatra's draught, nor any thing that was corruptible or perishing; for that which could not one minute retard the term of its own natural dissolution, could not be a price for the redemption of one perishing soul. And if we list but to remember, and then consider, that a miserable, lost, and accursed soul does so infinitely undervalue and disrelish all the goods and riches that this world dotes on, that he hath no more gust in them, or pleasure, than the fox hath in eating a turf; that, if he could be imagined to be the lord of ten thousand worlds, he would give them all for any shadow of hope of a possibility of returning to life again; that Dives in hell would have willingly gone on embassy to his father's house, that he might have been quit a little from his flames, and on

that condition would have given Lazarus the fee-simple of all his temporal possessions, though he had once denied to relieve him with the superfluities of his table; we shall soon confess that a moment of time is no good exchange for an eternity of duration; and a light unprofitable possession is not to be put in the balance against a soul, which is the glory of the creation; a soul, with whom God had made a contract, and contracted excellent relations; it being one of God's appellatives, that he is 'the Lover of souls.'

When God made a soul, it was only *Faciamus hominem ad imaginem nostram.* He spake the word, and it was done. But when man had lost this soul which the Spirit of God breathed into him, it was not so soon recovered. It is like the resurrection, which hath troubled the faith of many, who are more apt to believe that God made a man from nothing, than that he can return a man from dust and corruption. But for this resurrection of the soul, for the reimplacing the divine image, for the rescuing it from the devil's power, for the re-entitling it to the kingdoms of grace and glory, God did a greater work than the creation; he was fain to contract divinity to a span, to send a person to die for us, who, of himself, could not die, and was constrained to use rare and mysterious arts to make him capable of dying; he prepared a person instrumental to his purpose, by sending his Son from his own bosom, a person both God and man, an enigma to all nations and to all sciences; one that ruled over all the angels, that walked on the pavements of heaven, whose feet were clothed with stars, whose eyes were brighter than the sun, whose voice is louder than thunder, whose understanding is larger than that infinite space, which we imagine in the uncircumscribed distance beyond the first orb of heaven; a person to whom felicity was as essential as life to God: this was the only person that was designed, in the eternal decrees of the divine predestination, to pay the price of a soul, to ransom us from death; less than this person could not do it. For although a soul in its essence is finite, yet there were many infinites which were incident and annexed to the condition of lost souls. For all which because provision was to be made, nothing less than an infinite excellence could satisfy for a soul who was lost to infinite and eternal ages, who was

to be afflicted with insupportable and undetermined, that is, next to infinite, pains; who was to bear the load of an infinite anger from the provocation of an eternal God. And yet if it be possible that infinite can receive degrees, this is but one-half of the abyss, and I think the lesser. For that this person, who was God eternal, should be lessened in all his appearances to a span, to the little dimensions of a man; and that he should really become very contemptibly little, although, at the same time, he was infinitely and unalterably great; that is, essential, natural, and necessary felicity should turn into an intolerable, violent, and immense calamity to his person; that this great God should not be admitted to pay the price of our redemption, unless he would suffer that horrid misery, which that lost soul should suffer; as it represents the glories of his goodness, who used such rare and admirable instruments in actuating the designs of his mercy, so it shows our condition to have been very desperate, and our loss invaluable.

A soul in God's account is valued at the price of the blood, and shame, and tortures of the Son of God; and yet we throw it away for the exchange of sins that a man naturally is ashamed to own; we lose it for the pleasure, the sottish beastly pleasure, of a night. I need not say, we lose our soul to save our lives; for, though that was our blessed Saviour's instance of the great unreasonableness of men, who by 'saving their lives, lose them,' that is, in the great account of doomsday; though this, I say, be extremely unreasonable, yet there is something to be pretended in the bargain; nothing to excuse him with God, but something in the accounts of timorous men: but to lose our souls with swearing, that unprofitable, dishonorable, and unpleasant vice; to lose our souls with disobedience or rebellion, a vice that brings a curse and danger all the way in this life; to lose our souls with drunkenness, a vice which is painful and sickly in the very acting it, which hastens our damnation by shortening our lives; are instances fit to be put in the stories of fools and madmen. And all vice is a degree of the same unreasonableness; the most splendid temptation being nothing but a pretty well-weaved fallacy, a mere trick, a sophism, and a cheating and abusing the understanding. But that which I consider here is, that it is an affront and contradiction to the

wisdom of God, that we should so slight and undervalue a soul, in which our interest is so concerned; a soul, which he who made it, and who delighted not to see it lost, did account a fit purchase to be made by the exchange of his Son, the eternal Son of God. To which also I add this additional account, that a soul is so greatly valued by God, that we are not to venture the loss of it to save all the world. For, therefore, whosoever should commit a sin to save kingdoms from perishing; or, if the case should be put, that all the good men, and good causes, and good things in this world, were to be destroyed by tyranny, and it were in our power by perjury to save all these; that doing this sin would be so far from hallowing the crime, that it were to offer to God a sacrifice of what he most hates, and to serve him with swine's blood; and the rescuing all these from a tyrant, or a hangman, could not be pleasing to God on those terms, because a soul is lost by it, which is, in itself, a greater loss and misery than all the evils in the world put together can outbalance, and a loss of that thing for which Christ gave his blood a price. Persecutions and temporal death in holy men, and in a just cause, are but seeming evils, and therefore, not to be brought off with the loss of a soul, which is a real, but an intolerable calamity. And if God, for his own sake, would not have all the world saved by sin, that is, by the hazarding of a soul, we should do well, for our own sakes, not to lose a soul for trifles, for things that make us here to be miserable, and even here also to be ashamed.

III. But it may be, some natures, or some understandings care not for all this; therefore, I proceed to the third and most material consideration as to us, and I consider what it is to lose a soul, which Hierocles thus explicates: *Ὡς οἷόν τε τῇ ἀθανάτῳ οὐσίᾳ θανάτου μοίρας μεταλαχεῖν, οὐ τῇ εἰς τὸ μὴ εἶναι ἐκβάσει, ἀλλὰ τῇ τοῦ εὖ εἶναι ἀποπτώσει,* "An immortal substance can die, not by ceasing to be, but by losing all being well," by becoming miserable. And it is remarkable, when our blessed Saviour gave us caution that we should 'not fear them that can kill the body only, but fear him' (he says not that can kill the soul, but *τὸν δυνάμενον καὶ ψυχὴν καὶ σῶμα ἀπολέσαι ἐν γεέννῃ,*) 'that is able to destroy the body and soul in hell;'* which

* Matt. xix. 28.

word signifieth not 'death,' but 'tortures.' For some have chosen death for sanctuary, and fled to it to avoid intolerable shame, to give a period to the sense of a sharp grief, or to cure the earthquakes of fear; and the damned perishing souls shall wish for death with a desire impatient as their calamity; but this shall be denied them, because death were a deliverance, a mercy, and a pleasure, of which these miserable persons must despair for ever.

I shall not need to represent to your considerations those expressions of Scripture, which the Holy Ghost hath set down to represent to our capacities the greatness of this perishing, choosing such circumstances of character as were then usual in the world, and which are dreadful to our understanding as any thing; 'hell-fire,' is the common expression; for the Eastern nations accounted burnings the greatest of these miserable punishments, and burning malefactors was frequent. 'Brimstone and fire,' so St. John* calls the state of punishment, 'prepared for the devil and all his servants;' he added the circumstance of brimstone, for, by this time, the devil had taught the world more ingenious pains, and himself was newly escaped out of boiling oil and brimstone, and such bituminous matter; and the Spirit of God knew right well the worst expression was not bad enough. Σκότος ἐξώτερος, so our blessed Saviour calls it, 'the outer darkness;' that is, not only an abjection from the beatific regions, where God, and his angels, and his saints, dwell for ever; but then there is a positive state of misery expressed by darkness, Ζόφον σκότους, as two Apostles, St. Peter and St. Jude, call it, 'the blackness of darkness for ever.' In which, although it is certain that God, whose justice there rules, will inflict but just so much as our sins deserve, and not superadd degrees of undeserved misery, as he does to the saints of glory, (for God gives to blessed souls in heaven more, infinitely more, than all their good works could possibly deserve; and, therefore, their glory is infinitely bigger glory than the pains of hell are great pains) yet because God's justice in hell rules alone, without the allays and sweeter abatements of mercy, they shall have pure and unmingled misery;

* Revel. xiv. 10.

no pleasant thought to refresh their weariness, no comfort in another accident to alleviate their pressures, no waters to cool their flames. But because when there is a great calamity on a man, every such man thinks himself the most miserable; and though there are great degrees of pain in hell, yet there are none perceived by him that thinks he suffers the greatest; it follows, that every man that loses his soul in this darkness, is miserable beyond all those expressions, which the tortures of this world could furnish to the writers of the holy Scripture.

But I shall choose to represent this consideration in that expression of our blessed Saviour, Mark ix. 44. which himself took out of the prophet Isaiah, lxvi. 24. 'Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.' This is the συντελείας ἐρήμωσις spoken of by Daniel the prophet: for although this expression was a prediction of that horrid calamity and abscission of the Jewish nation, when God poured out a full phial of his wrath on the crucifiers of his Son, and that this, which was the greatest calamity which ever did, or ever shall, happen to a nation, Christ, with great reason, took to describe the calamity of accursed souls, as being the greatest instance to signify the greatest torment; yet we must observe that the difference of each state makes the same words in the several cases to be of infinite distinction. The worm stuck close to the Jewish nation, and the fire of God's wrath flamed out till they were consumed with a great and unheard-of destruction, till many millions did die accursedly, and the small remnant became vagabonds, and were reserved, like broken pieces after a storm, to show the greatness of the storm and misery of the shipwreck: but then this being translated to signify the state of accursed souls, whose dying is a continual perishing, who cannot cease to be, it must mean an eternity of duration, in a proper and natural signification.

And that we may understand it fully, observe the place in Isa. xxxiv. 8, &c. The prophet prophesies of the great destruction of Jerusalem for all her great iniquities: 'It is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Sion. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be

quenched night or day, the smoke thereof shall go up for ever; from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it, for ever and ever.' This is the final destruction of the nation; but this destruction shall have an end, because the nation shall end, and the anger also shall end in its own period, even then when God shall call the Jews into the common inheritance with the Gentiles, and all 'become the sons of God.' And this also was the period of their 'worm' as it is of their 'fire,' the fire of the divine vengeance on the nation; which was not to be extinguished till they were destroyed, as we see it come to pass. And thus also in St. Jude, 'the angels who kept not their first state,' are said to be 'reserved' by God 'in everlasting chains under darkness:' which word, 'everlasting,' signifies not absolutely to eternity, but to the utmost end of that period; for so it follows, 'unto the judgment of the great day;' that 'everlasting' lasts no longer. And in ver. 7. the word 'eternal' is just so used. The men of 'Sodom and Gomorrah are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire;' that is, of a fire which burned till they were quite destroyed, and the cities and the country with an irreparable ruin, never to be rebuilt and reinhabited as long as this world continues. The effect of which observation is this:

That these words, 'for ever,—everlasting,—eternal,—the never-dying worm,—the fire unquenchable,' being words borrowed by our blessed Saviour and his Apostles from the style of the Old Testament, must have a signification just proportionable to the state in which they signify: so that as this worm, when it signifies a temporal infliction, means a worm that never ceases giving torment till the body is consumed; when it is translated to an immortal state, it must signify as much in that proportion: that 'eternal,' that 'everlasting,' hath no end at all; because the soul cannot be killed in the natural sense, but is made miserable and perishing for ever; that is, 'the worm shall not die' so long as the soul shall be unconsumed; 'the fire shall not be quenched' till the period of an immortal nature comes. And that this shall be absolutely for ever, without any restriction, appears unanswerable in this, because the same 'for ever' that is for the blessed souls, the

same 'for ever' is for the accursed souls; but the blessed souls, 'that die in the Lord, henceforth shall die no more, death hath no power over them; for death is destroyed, it is swallowed up in victory,' saith St. Paul; and 'there shall be no more death,' saith St. John.* So that, because 'for ever' hath no end, till the thing or the duration itself have end, in the same sense in which the saints and angels 'give glory to God for ever,' in the same sense the lost souls shall suffer the evils of their sad inheritance: and since, after this death of nature, which is a separation of soul and body, there remains no more death, but this second death, this eternal perishing of miserable accursed souls, whose duration must be eternal; it follows, that 'the worm of conscience,' and 'the unquenchable fire' of hell, have no period at all, but shall last as long as God lasts, or the measures of a proper eternity; that they who provoke God to wrath by their base, unreasonable, and sottish practices, may know what their portion shall be in the everlasting habitations. And yet, suppose that Origen's opinion had been true, and that accursed souls should have ease and a period to their tortures after a thousand years; I pray, let it be considered, whether it be not a great madness to choose the pleasures or the wealth of a few years here, with trouble, with danger, with uncertainty, with labor, with intervals of sickness; and for this to endure the flames of hell for a thousand years together. The pleasures of the world no man can have for a hundred years; and no man hath pleasure a hundred days together, but he hath some trouble intervening, or at least a weariness and a loathing of the pleasure: and therefore to endure insufferable calamities, suppose it be for a hundred years, without any interruption, without so much comfort as the light of a small candle, or a drop of water amounts to in a fever, is a bargain to be made by no man that loves himself, or is not in love with infinite affliction.

If a man were condemned but to lie still, or to lie in bed in one posture without turning, for seven years together, would he not buy it off with the loss of all his estate? If a man were to be put on the rack for every day for three months together

* Rev. xxi. 4.

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equal, yet in the transactions of justice God h
there is no difference. And therefore it was esta
to dismiss a servant, when ever was there; is dar
wrich, to throw out an unprofitable boy, and
house; or for a wise man to snatch a plank from
fool; or if the master of the ship should challeng
on which his passenger swam for his life; or to
answers to others, which we first took for true, b
discovered to be false; or not to discover the gr
unnecessary aid for delivery. The reason of all th
the collateral advantages are not at all to be
matter of rights; and though I am desirous to
neighbour is to himself, yet it is necessary that
his own advantages, as I desire to be permitted
therefore, simplicity and sincerity in all contra
and exactly necessary, because its contrary
equality which justice hath placed in the affai
makes all things private, and makes a man d
and to be preferred before kings, and republics
it destroys society, and it makes multitudes
like heads of beasts, without proper instrume
and securities of possession; without faith, n
property, concerning all which there is no ordi
given, but that the towards of craft are but a fa
a great deal of dishonour, and much suspicion;
dish score; watches and guards, spies and jea
jealousies. But the crown of justice is a fair life,
possession, and an inheritance there where just
sits left the earth, even 'in the kingdom of the
call us to 'judgment for every word, and rend
according to his works.' And what is the ho
crate, though he hath gained, when the Lord
said: Falsehood not as rules contradicts con
But in the sum of this rule. – No falsehood to
violated in any contract."

2. Christian simplicity hath also its ceremo
obligations on its towards enemies, in questions

[1] Cicero, Off. iii. 13. 5. Heusing.

...nander and Philopœmen for their craft
...had commands it not as an ornament to
...which had influence into prosperous
...ous affairs, Nulla diuturnæ virtutis ne
...quidem debere bellorum eventus: "what-
...soever, were we to command." But he
...was not always a good man. Callicratidas
...followed the old way of downright hon-
...ὡς τὸν ἰχθύαν τρόπον. But Lysander
...τῷ ἀνδρὶ λοιπαίνων τὰ τοῦ κυβε-
...ία φύσει, but not noble in the conduct
...Euripides brings in Achilles, com-
...of his traveling, and the simplicity and

...ν ἀνεπιτήδειον τρόπῳ,
...τὸν τρόπον ἐκεῖνόν ἐγώ·

...tion, was my tutor, and he taught me
...honesty in all my manners."† It was
...yet some wise men do not condemn all
...victories by deceit: St. Austin allows
...St. Chrysostom commends it.‡ These
...that a crafty victory was better than a
...ly so it is, if the power gotten by craft
...d. But this business, as to the case of
...be determined. Enemies are to per-
...t and society, and therefore are not
...es and injurious prosecutions of the
...to take by violence, it is not unjust to
...craft. But this is so to be understood,
...obligation, either by the law of nations
..., no man dare to violate his faith or
...ge deal with an ingenuity equal to the
...on, and acts of favor, and endearment
...tus tells of the sons of Herod, that in

...Iphig. in Aul. 927. Brck, vol. i. p. 202.
...hanan, lib. i. de Sacerdotio.

(suppose him able to live so long), what would not he do to be quit of his torture? Would any man curse the king to his face, if he were sure to have both his hands burnt off, and to be tormented with torments three years together? Would any man in his wits accept of a hundred pounds a year for forty years, if he were sure to be tormented in the fire for the next hundred years together without intermission? Think then what a thousand years signify; ten ages, the age of two empires. But this account, I must tell you, is infinitely short, though I thus discourse to you how great fools wicked men are, though this opinion should be true. A goodly comfort, surely, that for two or three years' sottish pleasure, a man shall be infinitely tormented but for a thousand years! But then when we cast up the minutes, and years, and ages of eternity, the consideration itself is a great hell to those persons, who by their evil lives are consigned to such sad and miserable portions.

A thousand years is a long while to be in torment: we find a fever of one and twenty days to be like an age in length; but when the duration of an intolerable misery is for ever in the height, and for ever beginning, and ten thousand years have spent no part of its term, but it makes a perpetual efflux, and is like the centre of a circle, which ever transmits lines to the circumference: this is a consideration so sad, that the horror of it, and the reflection on its abode and duration, make a great part of the hell: for hell could not be hell without the despair of accursed souls; for any hope were a refreshment, and a drop of water, which would help to allay those flames, which, as they burn intolerably, so they must burn for ever.

And I desire you to consider, that although the Scripture uses the word 'fire' to express the torments of accursed souls, yet fire can no more equal the pangs of hell than it can torment an immaterial substance; the pains of perishing souls being as much more afflictive than the smart of fire, as the smart of fire is troublesome beyond the softness of Persian carpets, or the sensuality of the Asian luxury. For the pains of hell, and the perishing or losing the soul, is to suffer the wrath of God: *καὶ γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν πῦρ κατανάλισκον* 'our God is a consuming fire,' that is, the fire of hell. When God takes away all comfort from us, nothing to support our spirit is left

us; when sorrow is our food, and tears our drink; when it is eternal night, without sun, or star, or lamp, or sleep; when we burn with fire without light, that is, are laden with sadness without remedy, or hope of ease; and that this wrath is to be expressed and to fall on us in spiritual, immaterial, but most accursed, most pungent, and dolorous emanations; then we feel what it is to lose a soul,

We may guess at it by the terrors of a guilty conscience, those *verbera et laniatus*, those secret "lashings and whips" of the exterminating angel, those thorns in the soul, when a man is haunted by an evil spirit; those butcheries,—which the soul of a tyrant, or a violent or a vicious person, when he falls into fear or any calamity, does feel,—are the infinite arguments, that hell,—which is the consummation of the torment of conscience, just as manhood is the consummation of infancy, or as glory is the perfection of grace,—is an affliction greater than the bulk of heaven and earth; for there it is that God pours out the treasures of his wrath, and empties the whole magazine of thunderbolts, and all the armory of God is employed, not in the chastising, but in the tormenting, of a perishing soul. Lucian brings in Rhadamanthus, telling the poor wandering souls on the banks of Elysium, *Ὁπόσα ἄν τις ὑμῶν πονηρὰ ἐργάσηται παρὰ τὸν βίον, καθ' ἕκαστον αὐτῶν ἀφανῆ στίγματα ἐπὶ τῆς ψυχῆς περιφέρει,** "For every wickedness that any man commits in his life, when he comes to hell, he hath stamped on his soul an invisible brand" and mark of torment, and this begins here, and is not cancelled by death, but there is enlarged by the greatness of infinite, and the abodes of eternity. How great these torments of conscience are here, let any man imagine that can but understand what despair means; despair on just reason: let it be what it will, no misery can be greater than despair. And because I hope none here have felt those horrors to an evil conscience which are consignations to eternity, you may please to learn it by your own reason, or else by the sad instances of story. It is reported of Petrus Ilosuanus, a Polonian schoolmaster, that having read some ill-managed discourses of absolute decrees and divine reprobation, he

* Κατάπλοῦς, c. 24.

began to be fantastic and melancholic, and apprehensive that he might be one of those many whom God had decreed for hell from all eternity. From possible to probable, from probable to certain, the temptation soon carried him: and when he once began to believe himself to be a person inevitably perishing, it is not possible to understand perfectly what infinite fears, and agonies, and despairs, what tremblings, what horrors, what confusion and amazement, the poor man felt within him, to consider that he was to be tormented extremely, without remedy, even to eternal ages. This, in a short continuance, grew insufferable, and prevailed on him so far, that he hanged himself, and left an account of it to this purpose in writing in his study: "I am gone from hence to the flames of hell, and have forced my way thither, being impatient to try what those great torments are, which here I have feared with an insupportable amazement." This instance may suffice to show what it is to lose a soul. But I will take off from this sad discourse; only I shall crave your attention to a word of exhortation.

That you take care, lest for the purchase of a little, trifling, inconsiderable portion of the world, you come into this place and state of torment. Although Homer was pleased to compliment the beauty of Helena to such a height, as to say, "it was a sufficient price for all the evils which the Greeks and Trojans suffered for ten years;"

> Οὐ νέμεσις Τρῶας καὶ εὐκνήμιδας Ἀχαιοὺς
> Τοιῇ δ' ἀμφὶ γυναικὶ πολὺν χρόνον ἄλγεα πάσχειν.*

yet it was a more reasonable conjecture of Herodotus, that, during the ten years' siege of Troy, Helena, for whom the Greeks fought, was in Egypt, not in the city; because it was unimaginable but the Trojans would have thrown her over the walls, rather than, for the sake of such a trifle, have endured so great calamities. We are more sottish than the Trojans, if we retain our Helena, any one beloved lust, a painted devil, any sugared temptation, with, not the hazard, but the certainty of having such horrid miseries, such invaluable losses.

* Iliad. Γ. 156.

And certainly, it is a strange stupidity of spirit that can sleep in the midst of such thunder; when God speaks from heaven with his loudest voice, and draws aside his curtain, and shows his arsenal and his armory, full of arrows steeled with wrath, headed and pointed, and hardened with vengeance, still to snatch at those arrows, if they came but in the retinue of a rich fortune or a vain mistress, if they wait but on pleasure or profit, or in the rear of an ambitious design.

But let us not have such a hardiness against the threats and representments of the divine vengeance, as to take the little imposts and revenues of the world, and stand in defiance against God and the fears of hell; unless we have a charm that we can be ἀόρατοι τῷ Κριτῇ, 'invisible to the Judge' of heaven and earth, and are impregnable against, or are sure we shall be insensible of, the miseries of a perishing soul.

There is a sort of men, who, because they will be vicious and atheistical in their lives, have no way to go on with any plaisance and without huge disturbances, but by being also atheistical in their opinions; and to believe that the story of hell is but a bugbear to affright children and fools, easy-believing people, to make them soft and apt for government and designs of princes. And this is an opinion that befriends none but impure and vicious persons. Others there are, that believe God to be all mercy, that he forgets his justice; believing that none shall perish with so sad a ruin, if they do but at their death-bed ask God forgiveness, and say they are sorry, but yet continue their impiety till their house be ready to fall: being like the Circassians, whose gentlemen enter not in the church till they be threescore years old, that is, in effect, till by their age they cannot any longer use rapine; till then they hear service at their windows, dividing unequally their life between sin and devotion, dedicating their youth to robbery, and their old age to a repentance without restitution.

Our youth, and our manhood, and old age, are all of them due to God, and justice and mercy are to him equally essential; and as this life is a time of the possibilities of mercy, so to them that neglect it, the next world shall be a state of pure and unmingled justice.

Remember the fatal and decretory sentence which God hath

passed on all mankind: 'It is appointed to all men once to die, and after death comes judgment.' And if any of us were certain to die next morning, with what earnestness should we pray! with what hatred should we remember our sins! with what scorn should we look on the licentious pleasures of the world! Then nothing could be welcome unto us but a prayer-book, no company but a comforter and a guide of souls, no employment but repentance, no passions but in order to religion, no kindness for a lust that hath undone us. And if any of you have been arrested with alarms of death, or been in hearty fear of its approach, remember what thoughts and designs then possessed you, how precious a soul was then in your account, and what then you would give that you had despised the world, and done your duty to God and man, and lived a holy life. It will come to that again; and we shall be in that condition in which we shall perfectly understand, that all the things and pleasures of the world are vain, and unprofitable, and irksome, and that he only is a wise man who secures the interest of his soul, though it be with the loss of all this world, and his own life into the bargain. When we are to depart this life, to go to strange company and stranger places, and to an unknown condition, then a holy conscience will be the best security, the best possession; it will be a horror, that every friend we meet shall, with triumph, upbraid to us the sottishness of our folly: "Lo, this is the goodly change you have made! you had your good things in your life time, and how like you the portion that is reserved to you for ever?" The old rabbins, those poets of religion, report of Moses, that when the courtiers of Pharaoh were sporting with the child Moses, in the chamber of Pharaoh's daughter, they presented to his choice an ingot of gold in one hand and a coal of fire in the other; and that the child snatched at the coal, thrust it into his mouth, and so singed and parched his tongue, that he stammered ever after. And certainly it is infinitely more childish in us, for the glittering of the small glow-worms and the charcoal of worldly possessions, to swallow the flames of hell greedily in our choice: such a bit will produce a worse stammering than Moses had: for so the accursed and lost souls have their ugly and horrid dialect; they roar and blaspheme,

blaspheme and roar, for ever. And suppose God should now, at this instant, send the great archangel with his trumpet, to summon all the world to judgment, would not all this seem a notorious visible truth, a truth which you will then wonder that every man did not lay to his heart and preserve there, in actual, pious, and effective consideration? Let the trumpet of God perpetually sound in your ears, *Surgite, mortui, et venite ad judicium:* place yourselves, by meditation, every day on your death-bed, and remember what thoughts shall then possess you, and let such thoughts dwell in your understanding for ever, and be the parent of all your resolutions and actions. The doctors of the Jews report, that when Absalom hanged among the oaks by the hair of the head, he seemed to see under him hell gaping wide ready to receive him; and he durst not cut off the hair that entangled him, for fear he should fall into the horrid lake, whose portion is flames and torment, but chose to protract his miserable life a few minutes in that pain of posture, and to abide the stroke of his pursuing enemies: his condition was sad when his arts of remedy were so vain.

> Τί γὰρ βροτῶν ἂν σὺν κακοῖς μεμιγμένον
> Θνήσκειν δ μέλλων τοῦ χρόνου κέρδος φέρει;—Soph.

A condemned man hath but small comfort to stay the singing of a long psalm; it is the case of every vicious person. Hell is wide open to every impenitent persevering sinner, to every unpurged person.

> Noctes atque dies patet atri janua Ditis.*

And although God hath lighted his candle, and the lantern of his word and clearest revelations is held out to us, that we can see hell in its worst colors and most horrid representments; yet we run greedily after baubles, unto that precipice which swallows up the greatest part of mankind; and then only we begin to consider, when all consideration is fruitless.

He, therefore, is a huge fool, that heaps up riches, that greedily pursues the world, and at the same time (for so it must be) 'heaps up wrath to himself against the day of wrath;'

* Æn. vi. 127.

when sickness and death arrest him, then they appear unprofitable, and himself extremely miserable; and if you would know how great that misery is, you may take account of it by those fearful words and killing rhetoric of Scripture: 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;' and, 'Who can dwell with the everlasting burnings?' That is, no patience can abide there one hour, where they must dwell for ever.

SUMMARY OF SERMON X.

MATTHEW, CHAP. X.—VERSE 16.

PART I.

When our Saviour entailed a law and a condition of sufferings, and promised a state of persecution to his servants, and withal had charmed them with the bands of so many passive graces; *being sent forth as sheep among wolves*, innocent and defenceless, &c.; their condition seemed nothing else but a designation to slaughter; and when an Apostle invited a proselyte to come to Christ, it was, as it were, a snare laid for his life; for he could neither conceal his religion nor hide his person, &c. But though God bound our hands behind us, he did not tie up our understandings: although we might not use our swords, yet we might use our reason, &c.; and thus the disciples of Christ overcame the power of the Roman legions by a wise religion: and the Christian, though exposed to persecution, is so secured that he shall never need to die, but when circumstances are so ordered that his reason is convinced that it is then fit he should; fit in order to God's purposes and his own. For he that is innocent is safe against all the powers of the world, if they rule with justice; and he that is prudent will escape many violences that come from injustice; and no wit of man, no government, no armies can do more. Here then are the two arms defensive of a Christian; prudence against the evils of men; innocence against the evils of the devil and of his kingdom: this topic enlarged on.

In order to the following discourse, we are first to consider

whether this can be a commandment, or what it is: can all Christians be enjoined to be wise and prudent? It is as if God commanded us to be eloquent, or learned, or rich. Prudence is a gift of God, a blessing of an excellent nature, which therefore cannot be imposed on us, as arising from ourselves.

To this it may be answered; that Christian prudence is, in many instances, a direct duty: this explained. Its parts and proper acts consist in the following particulars.

1. It is the duty of Christian prudence to choose the end of a Christian, that which is perfective of a man, satisfactory to reason, the rest of a Christian, the beatification of his spirit; and this is, to choose, desire, and propound to himself heaven, and the fruition of God, as the end of all his acts and his purposes: for in the nature of things, that is most eligible, which is most perfective of our nature, and which is the satisfaction of our most reasonable appetites: this topic enlarged on; and the emptiness of the things of this world shown, in comparison with the excellence of those things which belong to God and to religion.

2. It is a duty of Christian prudence to pursue this great end with apt means and instruments in proportion to that end. It cannot be a vigorous prosecution, unless the means have an efficacy or worth proportionate to the difficulty, and something of the excellency of the end which is designed: this topic dilated on; the value of the things sought explained, as well as duty, in fervency of prayer, watchfulness of conduct, resistance of temptation, &c.

3. It is an office of prudence to serve God, so that we may, at the same time, preserve our lives and estates, our interest and reputation, as far as they can consist together. The Christian religion carrying us to heaven, does it by the way of a man; and by the body it serves the soul, as by the soul it serves God; and therefore it endeavors to secure the body and its interest, that it may prolong the stage in which we are to

run for the mighty prize of our salvation, &c. He that through an indiscreet zeal casts himself into a needless danger, hath betrayed his life to tyranny, and tempts the sin of an enemy: he loses to God the service of many years, &c. He that invites the cruelty of a tyrant by his own follies, suffers as a wilful person, and enters into the portion and reward of fools. Hence the precept of our Saviour, *Beware of men.* Use your prudence to the purposes of avoiding their snares. *Walk circumspectly, not as fools*, &c.: if you fall into evil times, purchase what respite you can, by all honest arts, if you do not compromise your duty: and when the tyrant drives you forth from all your guards and retirement, offering violence to your duty and tempting you to dishonest acts, then boldly lay down your neck to the stroke; fear not to die the most shameful death of the cross or the gallows: this topic enlarged on: instances given of honest evasion and of religious prudence among the early Christians. Sometimes, however, they used improper arts and subterfuges: instance of this in the *libellatici*, or libellers, who gave money for false certificates of their having sacrificed to idols; by which means they disgraced their religion, were excommunicated, and not received again but after a severe repentance. *He that confesseth me before men*, says our Saviour, *I will confess him before my heavenly Father;* and if here he refuseth to own me, I will not own him hereafter. As this is against Christian nobleness and fortitude, so is it against Christian prudence to provoke danger, like those who, when inquisition was made after Christians, went and offered themselves to die. God, when he sends a persecution, will select such persons as he will have to suffer. In the mean time, let us do our duty, as long and as strictly as we can; neither turning our zeal into the ambition of death, nor our prudence into craft and covetousness. Conclusion.

PART II.

4. It is the part of Christian prudence so to order the affairs of our life, as that, in all the offices of our souls and conversation, we may do honor to the religion which we profess; for the follies and vices of its professors give great advantage to the adversary to speak reproachfully, and do alienate the hearts and hinder the compliance of those undetermined persons, who are apt to be persuaded, if their understandings be not prejudiced.

But as our necessary duty is bound on us by one tie more, in order to the honor of God's cause, so it particularly binds us to many circumstances, adjuncts, and parts of duty, which have no other commandment but the law of prudence. There are some sects of Christians which have some one constant indisposition, which, as a character, divides them from all others, and makes them reproved on all hands. Some are so suspicious and ill-natured, that, if a person of gentle disposition fall into their hands he is presently soured and made morose. Others do things so like what they condemn, that they are forced to insignificant distinctions, in order to make themselves believe they are innocent, whilst they offend all men besides: this topic enlarged on.

Never let sins pollute our religion with arts of the world, nor let us offer to support the ark with unhallowed hands, nor mingle false propositions with true, nor do things which are like to vices; neither let us ever speak things dishonorable to God, nor abuse our brother for God's sake, &c.

Among ourselves also we serve the devil's ends, and minister to an eternal disunion, by saying and doing things which look unhandsomely: this explained.

One thing should be observed; that here the question being about prudence, and the matter of doing honor to our religion, it is not enough to say we can with learning justify all that we

do, and make all whole with three or four distinctions: this topic enlarged on and illustrated.

We must be curious in observing the circumstances of men, and satisfying all their reasonable expectations, and doing things at that rate of charity and religion, which they are taught, as being prescribed in the institution: this enlarged on.

But above all things, those sects of Christians, whose professed doctrine brings destruction and diminution to government, give the most intolerable scandal and dishonor to the institution; and it had been impossible for Christianity to have prevailed over the wisdom and power of the Greeks and Romans, if it had not been humble to superiors, patient of injuries, charitable to the needy, obedient to rulers, &c.

There are some persons, whose religion is much disgraced, because they change their propositions, according as their temporal necessities or advantages return. They that in their weakness cry out against all violence as against persecution, and when they become prosperous swell out into tyrants, let all the world know that at first they were pusillanimous, and at last outrageous; that their doctrine first served their fear, and at last served their rage; and that they did not intend at all to serve God: and then who shall believe them in any thing else? this enlarged on.

5. It is also a duty of Christian prudence, that the teachers of others by authority, or reprovers of their vices by charity, should make their own persons apt to do it without objection. He that means to gain a soul, must not make his sermon an ostentation of his eloquence, but the law of his own life: this enlarged on.

Hither it also appertains, that in public or private reproofs we observe circumstances of time, of place, of person, of disposition. The vices of a king are not to be opened publicly; and princes must not be reprehended as a man reproves his servant. He also that reproves a vice, should treat the person with honor

and civility, and by fair opinions and mild address place the man in the regions of modesty, and the confines of grace and repentance: this topic enlarged on.

6. It is a duty of Christian prudence not to suffer our souls to walk alone, unguarded, unguided, and more single than in other actions and interests of our lives, which are of less concernment. If we consider how much God hath done to save our souls, and after all that, how many ways there are for a man's soul to miscarry, we should think it very necessary to call to a spiritual man to take us by the hand, and lead us in the ways of God, in the regions of duty, and through the labyrinths of danger; this topic enlarged on; wherein it is shown that it is at least worth our while to take a spiritual guide. But because we are in the question of prudence, we must consider whether it be necessary to do so. If a man's estate be questioned, or his life shaken by diseases, it is not thought enough to employ one agent, or to send for a good woman to minister the juices of her garden. But then is the soul the only safe and trifling thing about us? Are there not a thousand dangers, and ten thousand difficulties, and innumerable possibilities of misadventure? this topic enlarged on. But what advantage shall we reap from a spiritual guide? Much every way. For this is the way that God hath appointed, who in every age hath sent a succession of spiritual persons, whose office is to minister in holy things, and to be stewards of his household, dispensers of his mysteries, preachers of his law, &c.; and that which is good discourse in the mouth of another man, is in theirs an ordinance of God, and prevails by way of blessing: this topic enlarged on to the end.

PART III.

7. As it is a part of Christian prudence to take a spiritual man for a guide to the conduct of our souls, so it also concerns

us greatly that we be prudent in the choice of him. Concerning which it will be impossible to give characters particular enough, without the aid of prayer, experience, and the grace of God: this enlarged on and explained. When St. John was to separate false teachers from true, he took no other course but to mark the doctrine which was of God; and by this he bids his scholars avoid the different heresies which then prevailed respecting the coming and the nature of Jesus Christ. But this will signify nothing to us: for all Christians *confess Jesus Christ come in the flesh.*

In the following ages of the church, men have been so curious to signify misbelievers, that they have invented and observed signs, which in some cases were real appendages of false believers, but yet such as might attach themselves to good members of the catholic church. Some few will here be remarked, that, by removing the uncertain, we may fix our inquiries on certain significations.

1. Some men distinguish error from truth, by calling the doctrine of their adversaries *new, and of yesterday.* And certainly this is a good sign, if it be rightly applied; for since all Christian doctrine is that which Christ taught his church, and which the Spirit enlarged or expounded, and the Apostles delivered, our account begins then; and whatever is contrary to what they taught, is new and false; and whatever is besides what they taught, is no part of our religion. But if a truth returns, as it were, from banishment; if it was from the first, though the holy fire hath been long buried, we do not call that new, &c.: this topic enlarged on.

2. Some would have false teachers sufficiently signified by a name, or private appellative, as Papist, Lutheran, Calvinist, or Socinian; and think it enough to denominate them not of Christ, if they are called by the name of a man. And indeed the thing is in itself bad: but if by this mark we esteem false teachers sufficiently signified, we must follow no man, no church,

nor communion; for all are by their adversaries marked with an appellative of singularity and separation: this enlarged on.

3. Amongst some men a sect is thought to be sufficiently reproved, if it subdivides and breaks itself into little fractions, or changes its own opinions. If indeed its followers decline their own doctrine, no man hath reason to believe them on the reputation which they have thus forfeited or renounced, in changing that which they at first passionately set forth; and therefore we need not believe them farther than when they can prove what they say: but for the other part of the sign, when men fall out among themselves on account of other interests or opinions, it is no argument that they are in error concerning that doctrine, which they all unitedly teach or condemn respectively: this enlarged on.

4. Whoever break the bands of a society or communion, in whose confession they were baptised, bring scandal on their doctrines and persons, and give suspicious men reason to decline their assemblies, and not to choose them for any thing of their authority or outward circumstances. And St. Paul bids the Romans to *mark them that cause divisions and offences;* but the following words make the caution prudent and practicable, *contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them:* they that recede from the doctrine which they have learned, they cause the offence; and if they also obtrude this on their congregations, they also make the division. We must receive no doctrine which is contrary to that taught by Christ and his Apostles; but in that case must separate from the congregation, and adhere to Christ. But this is not to be done, unless the thing be evident and notorious: this topic dilated on.

5. The ways of direction which we have from Holy Scripture, to distinguish false Apostles from true, are taken from their doctrine, or their lives. That of the doctrine is the more sure way, if we can hit on it; but that also is the thing

signified, and needs to have other signs. St. John and St. Paul took this way, for they were able to do it infallibly: this shown. And we also might do so as easily, if men would suffer Christian faith to rest in its own perfect simplicity, unmingled with arts, and opinions, and interests. When we choose our doctrine or our side, let us take that which is in the plain unexpounded words of Scripture. Next let us choose that which is most advantageous to a holy life, and to the proper graces of a Christian; in which St. Paul directs us: *Let us be careful to maintain good works for necessary uses:* for he that heartily pursues these proportions, cannot be a bad man, though he were accidentally, and in particular explications, deceived.

6. But, because this is an act of wisdom rather than prudence, and supposes science or knowlege rather than experience, therefore it concerns Christians to observe the practice and rules of practice, which their teachers and catechists use in their spiritual ministry; for although many signs are uncertain, yet some are infallible, and some highly probable.

7. Therefore those teachers that pretend to be guided by a private spirit, are certainly false. *No Scripture is of private interpretation,* saith St. Peter, that is, of private emission or declaration: this explained. Such pretence of a single extraordinary spirit is nothing else but the spirit of pride, error, and delusion; a snare wherewith to catch easy, credulous souls, &c.

8. Those are to be suspected for evil guides, who, to get authority among the people, pretend great zeal, and use great liberty in reproving princes and governors, nobility and prelates, &c. Such homilies cannot be the effects of a holy religion, as undermine authority, make the people discontented, bold against their rulers, and immodest in their stations: this topic enlarged on.

9. The Apostles, in all prophecies concerning such men, have remarked lust to be the inseparable companion of these

rebellious prophets. *They are filthy dreamers, they defile the flesh*, saith St. Jude. *They walk after the flesh, in the lust of uncleanness*, saith St. Peter, &c.: this topic enlarged on.

10. Those prophets and pastors, that pretend severity and live loosely, or are severe in small things and give liberty in greater, or who forbid some sins and yet practise or teach those that serve their interests or their sect, are to be suspected and avoided.

11. The substance of all is this; that we must not choose our doctrine by our guide, but our guide by the doctrine, &c.

12. Besides these premises, there are other lesser lights that may help to make our judgment clearer; but only when they are in conjunction with some of the preceding characters, which are drawn by the great lines of Scripture: such as, for example, when the teachers of sects stir up unprofitable questions; causelessly retire from the universal customs of Christendom; cancel memorials of the greatest mysteries of our redemption; make their religion to consist in speculations, abstractions, raptures, or in outward ceremonies, &c. &c. Here indeed is the great necessity that we should have the prudence and discretion of serpents. But two or three cautions are to be inserted.

1. We cannot expect that by these, or any other signs, we shall be able to discover the characters of all men, whether they teach an error or not. It is enough that we decline those guides that would lead us to hell: we need not think that we are enticed to death by the weaknesses of every disagreeing brother.

2. In all discerning of sects, we must be careful to distinguish the faults of men from the evils of their doctrine: for some there are that speak very well, and do very ill; men of holy calling, but of unholy lives, &c.

3. Let us make one separation more, and then we may act according to the premises. If we espy a design or an evil mark

on one doctrine, let us divide it from the other that are not so spotted: this topic dilated on.

These are the general rules of Christian prudence here chosen to be insisted on: there are others indeed more particular, and well worthy of our observance; namely, that we be careful to decline a danger, watchful against a temptation, wise in choosing our company, reserved and wary in our friendships, communicative in our charity, &c.: this topic dilated on to the end.

SERMON X.

OF CHRISTIAN PRUDENCE.

MATTHEW, CHAP. X.—VERSE 16.

Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

PART I.

When our blessed Saviour entailed a law and a condition of sufferings, and promised a state of persecution to his servants; and withal had charmed them with the bands and unactive chains of so many passive graces, that they should not be able to stir against the violence of tyrants, or abate the edge of axes by any instrument but their own blood; being 'sent forth as sheep among wolves,' innocent and silent, harmless and defenceless, certainly exposed to sorrow, and uncertainly guarded in their persons; their condition seemed nothing else but a designation to slaughter: and when they were drawn into the folds of the church, they were betrayed into the hands of evil men, infinitely and unavoidably: and when an Apostle invited a proselyte to come to Christ, it was in effect a snare laid for his life; and he could neither conceal his religion, nor hide his person, nor avoid a captious question, nor deny his accusation, nor elude the bloody arts of orators and informers, nor break prisons, nor any thing but die. If the case stood just thus, it was well eternity stood at the outer days of our life, ready to receive such harmless people: but surely there could be no art in the design, no pitying of human weaknesses, no complying with the condition of man, no allowances made for customs

and prejudices of the world, no inviting men by the things of men, no turning nature into religion; but it was all the way a direct violence, and an open prostitution of our lives, and a throwing away our fortune into a sea of rashness and credulity. But, therefore, God ordered the affairs and necessities of religion in other ways, and to other purposes. Although God bound our hands behind us, yet he did not tie our understandings up: although we might not use our swords, yet we might use our reason: we were not suffered to be violent, but we might avoid violence by all the arts of prudence and innocence: if we did take heed of sin, we might also take heed of men. And because in all contentions between wit and violence, prudence and rudeness, learning and the sword, the strong hand took it first, and the strong head possessed it last; the strong man first governed, and the witty man succeeded him, and lasted longer; it came to pass, that the wisdom of the Father hath so ordered it, that all his disciples should overcome the power of the Roman legions by a wise religion; and prudence and innocence should become the mightiest guards; and the Christian, although exposed to persecution, yet it is so secured that he shall never need to die, but when the circumstances are so ordered, that his reason is convinced that then it is fit he should; fit, I say, in order to God's purposes and his own.

For he that is innocent, is safe against all the rods and the axes of all the consuls of the world, if they rule by justice; and he that is prudent, will also escape from many rudenesses and irregular violences that can come by injustice: and no wit of man, no government, no armies, can do more. For Cæsar perished in the midst of all his legions and all his honors; and against chance and irregularities there is no provision less than infinite that can give security. And although prudence alone cannot do this, yet innocence gives the greatest title to that Providence which only can, if he pleases, and will, if it be fitting. Here, then, are the two arms defensive of a Christian: prudence against the evils of men, innocence against the evils of the devil and all that relates to his kingdom.

Prudence fences against persecution and the evil snares, against the opportunities and occasions of sin; it prevents surprises, it fortifies all its proper weaknesses, it improves our

talents, it does advantage to the kingdom of Christ and the interests of the Gospel, it secures our condition, and instructs our choice in all the ways and just passages to felicity, it makes us to live profitably and die wisely; and without it, simplicity would turn to silliness, zeal into passion, passion into fury, religion into scandal, conversation into a snare, civilities into temptation, courtesies into danger; and an imprudent person falls into a condition of harmless, rich, and unwary fools, or rather of birds, sheep, and beavers, who are hunted and persecuted for the spoils of their fleece or their flesh, their skins or their entrails, and have not the foresight to avoid a snare, but by their fear and undefending follies are driven thither where they die infallibly. Σπουδαίοις πολλοῖς εἰς σοφὸς διόλλυται.* Every good man is encircled with many enemies and dangers; and his virtue shall be rifled, and the decency of his soul and spirit shall be discomposed, and turned into a heap of inarticulate and disorderly fancies, unless, by the methods and guards of prudence, it be managed and secured.

But in order to the following discourse and its method, we are first to consider, whether this be, or, indeed, can be, a commandment, or what is it. For can all men that give up their names in baptism, be enjoined to be wise and prudent? It is as if God would command us to be eloquent or witty men, fine speakers, or straight-bodied, or excellent scholars, or rich men: if he please to make us so, we are so. And prudence is a gift of God, a blessing of an excellent nature, and of great leisure, and a wise opportunity, and a severe education, and a great experience, and a strict observation, and good company; all which, being either wholly or in part out of our power, may be expected as free gifts, but cannot be imposed as commandments.

To this I answer, that Christian prudence is, in very many instances, a direct duty; in some, an instance and advice, in order to degrees and advantages. Where it is a duty, it is put into every man's power; where it is an advice, it is only expected according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not: and even here, although the events of pru-

* Stobæus, Fleril. tit. iii. p. 17.

dence are out of our power, yet the endeavors and the observation, the diligence and caution, the moral part of it, and the plain conduct of our necessary duty, (which are portions of this grace) are such things which God will demand in proportion to the talent which he hath intrusted into our banks. There are, indeed, some Christians very unwary and unwise in the conduct of their religion; and they cannot all help it, at least not in all degrees; but yet they may be taught to do prudent things, though not to be prudent persons: if they have not the prudence of advice and conduct, yet they may have the prudence of obedience and of disciples. And the event is this: without prudence their virtue is unsafe, and their persons defenceless, and their interest is unguarded; for prudence is a handmaid waiting at the production and birth of virtue; it is a nurse to it in its infancy, its patron in assaults, its guide in temptations, its security in all portions of chance and contingencies; and he that is imprudent, if he have many accidents and varieties, is in great danger of being none at all; or, if he be, at the best he is but a 'weak and an unprofitable servant,' useless to his neighbor, vain in himself, and as to God, 'the least in the kingdom:' his virtue is contingent, and by chance, not proportioned to the reward of wisdom, and the election of a wise religion.

Προνοίας οὐδὲν ἀνθρώποις ἔφυ
*Κέρδος λαβεῖν ἄμεινον, οὐδὲ νοῦ σοφοῦ.**

No purchase, no wealth, no advantage, is great enough to be compared to a wise soul and a prudent spirit; and he that wants it, hath a less virtue, and a defenceless mind, and will suffer a mighty hazard in the interest of eternity. Its parts and proper acts consist in the following particulars.

1. It is the duty of Christian prudence to choose the end of a Christian, that which is perfective of a man, satisfactory to reason, the rest of a Christian, and the beatification of his spirit; and that is, to choose and desire, and propound to himself heaven, and the fruition of God, as the end of all his acts and arts, his designs and purposes. For, in the nature of

* Sophocl. ap. Stob. Floril. tit. iii. p. 15.

things, that is most eligible and most to be pursued, which is most perfective of our nature, and is the acquiescence, the satisfaction, and proper rest of our most reasonable appetites. Now the things of this world are difficult and uneasy, full of thorns and empty of pleasures; they fill a diseased faculty or an abused sense, but are an infinite dissatisfaction to reason and the appetites of the soul; they are short and transient, and they never abide, unless sorrow, like a chain, be bound about their leg, and then they never stir till the grace of God and religion breaks it, or else that the rust of time eats the chain in pieces; they are dangerous and doubtful, few and difficult, sordid and particular, not only not communicable to a multitude, but not diffusive on the whole man, there being no one pleasure or object in this world that delights all the parts of man: and, after all this, they are originally from earth and from the creatures, only that they oftentimes contract alliances with hell and the grave, with shame and sorrow; and all these put together make no great amability or proportion to a wise man's choice. But, on the other side, the things of God are the noblest satisfactions to those desires which ought to be cherished and swelled up to infinite; their deliciousness is vast and full of relish, and their very appendant thorns are to be chosen; for they are gilded, they are safe and medicinal, they heal the wound they make, and bring forth fruit of a blessed and a holy life. The things of God and of religion are easy and sweet, they bear entertainments in their hand, and reward at their back; their good is certain and perpetual, and they make us cheerful to-day and pleasant to-morrow; and spiritual songs end not in a sigh and a groan: neither, like unwholesome physic, do they let loose a present humor, and introduce an habitual indisposition; but they bring us to the felicity of God, 'the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever:' they do not give a private and particular delight, but their benefit is public; like the incense of the altar, it sends up a sweet smell to heaven, and makes atonement for the religious man that kindled it, and delights all the standers-by, and makes the very air wholesome. There is no blessed soul goes to heaven, but he makes a general joy in all the mansions where the saints do dwell, and in all the chapels where the angels sing:

and the joys of religion are not univocal, but productive of rare, and accidental, and preternatural pleasures; for the music of holy hymns delights the ear, and refreshes the spirit, and makes the very bones of the saint to rejoice. And charity, or the giving alms to the poor, does not only ease the poverty of the receiver, but makes the giver rich, and heals his sickness, and delivers from death: and temperance, though it be in the matter of meat, and drink, and pleasures, yet hath an effect on the understanding, and makes the reason sober, and the will orderly, and the affections regular, and does things beside and beyond their natural and proper efficacy: for all the parts of our duty are watered with the showers of blessing, and bring forth fruit according to the influence of heaven, and beyond the capacities of nature.

And now let the voluptuous person go and try whether putting his wanton hand to the bosom of his mistress will get half such honor as Scævola put on his head, when he put his hand into the fire. Let him see whether a drunken meeting will cure a fever or make him wise: a hearty and a persevering prayer will. Let him tell me, if spending great sums of money on his lusts will make him sleep soundly, or be rich: charity will; alms will increase his fortune, and a good conscience shall charm all his cares and sorrows into a most delicious slumber. Well may a full goblet wet the drunkard's tongue, and then the heat rising from the stomach will dry the sponge, and heat it into the scorchings and little images of hell: and the follies of a wanton bed will turn the itch into a smart, and empty the reins of all their lustful powers: but can they do honor or satisfaction in any thing that must last, and that ought to be provided for? No; all the things of this world are little, and trifling, and limited, and particular, and sometimes necessary, because men are miserable, wanting, and imperfect; but they never do any thing toward perfection, but their pleasure dies like the time in which it danced awhile; and when the minute is gone, so is the pleasure too, and leaves no footstep but the impression of a sigh, and dwells no where but in the same house where you shall find yesterday, that is, in forgetfulness and annihilation; unless its only child, sorrow, shall marry, and breed more of its kind, and so continue its memory and

name to eternal ages. It is, therefore, the most necessary part of prudence to choose well in the main stake: and the dispute is not much; for if eternal things be better than temporal, the soul more noble than the body, virtue more honorable than the basest vices, a lasting joy to be chosen before an eternal sorrow, much to be preferred before little, certainty before danger, public good things before private evils, eternity before moments; then let us sit down in religion, and make heaven to be our end, God to be our Father, Christ our elder Brother, the Holy Ghost the earnest of our inheritance, virtue to be our employment; and then we shall never enter into the portion of fools and accursed ill-choosing spirits. Nazianzen said well, *Malim prudentiæ guttam quam fœcundioris fortunæ pelagus:* "One drop of prudence is more useful than an ocean of a smooth fortune:" for prudence is a rare instrument towards heaven; and a great fortune is made oftentimes the highway to hell and destruction. However, thus far prudence is our duty; every man can be so wise, and is bound to it, to choose heaven, and a cohabitation with God, before the possessions and transient vanities of the world.

2. It is a duty of Christian prudence to pursue this great end with apt means and instruments in proportion to that end. No wise man will sail to Ormus in a cock-boat, or use a child for his interpreter; and that general is a Cyclops without an eye, who chooses the sickest men to man his towns and the weakest to fight his battles. It cannot be a vigorous prosecution, unless the means have an efficacy or worth commensurate to all the difficulty, and something of the excellency of that end which is designed. And, indeed, men use not to be so weak in acquiring the possessions of their temporals; but in matters of religion they think any thing effective enough to secure the greatest interest: as if all the fields of heaven and the regions of that kingdom were waste ground, and wanted a colony of planters; and that God invited men to heaven on any terms, that he might rejoice in the multitude of subjects. For cestain it is, men do more to get a little money than for all the glories of heaven: men 'rise up early,' and 'sit up late,' and 'eat the bread of carefulness,' to become richer than their neighbors; and are amazed at every loss, and impatient of an

evil accident, and feel a direct storm of passion if they suffer in their interest. But in order to heaven they are cold in their religion, undevout in their prayers, incurious in their walking, unwatchful in their circumstances, indifferent in the use of their opportunities, infrequent in their discoursings of it, not inquisitive of the way, and yet think they shall surely go to heaven. But a prudent man knows, that by the greatness of the purchase he is to make an estimate of the value and the price. When we ask of God any great thing,—as wisdom, delivery from sickness, his Holy Spirit, the forgiveness of sins, the grace of chastity, restitution to his favor, or the like,—do we hope to obtain them without a high opinion of the things we ask? and if we value them highly, must we not desire them earnestly? and if we desire them earnestly, must we not beg for them fervently? and whatsoever we ask for fervently, must we not beg for frequently? And then, because prayer is but one hand toward the reaching a blessing, and God requires our co-operation and endeavor, and we must work with both hands, are we not convinced that our prayers are either faint, or a design of laziness, when we either ask coldly, or else pray loudly, hoping to receive the graces we need without labor? A prudent person, that knows to value the best object of his desires, will also know that he must observe the degrees of labor, according to the excellency of the reward. That prayer must be effectual,—fervent,—frequent,—continual,—holy,—passionate,—that must get a grace or secure a blessing: the love that we must have to God must be such as to keep his commandments, and make us willing to part with all our estate, and all our honor, and our life, for the testimony of a holy conscience: our charity to our neighbor must be expressive in a language of a real friendship, aptness to forgive, readiness to forbear, in pitying infirmities, in relieving necessities, in giving our goods and our lives, and quitting our privileges to save his soul, to secure and support his virtue: our repentance must be full of sorrows and care, of diligence and hatred against sin; it must drive out all, and leave no affections towards it; it must be constant and persevering, fearful of relapse, and watchful of all accidents: our temperance must sometimes turn into abstinence, and most commonly be severe, and ever without reproof: 'He that

striveth for masteries is temperate,' saith St. Paul, 'in all things.' He that does all this, may, with some pretence and reason, say, he intends to go to heaven. But they that will not deny a lust, nor restrain an appetite; they that will be drunk when their friends do merrily constrain them, or love a cheap religion, and a gentle and lame prayer, short and soft, quickly said and soon passed over, seldom returning and but little observed; how is it possible that they should think themselves persons disposed to receive such glorious crowns and sceptres, such excellent conditions, which they have not faith enough to believe, nor attention enough to consider, and no man can have wit enough to understand? But so might an Arcadian shepherd look from the rocks, or through the clefts of the valley where his sheep graze, and wonder that the messenger stays so long from coming to him to be crowned king of all the Greek islands, or to be adopted heir to the Macedonian monarchy. It is an infinite love of God that we have heaven on conditions which we can perform with greatest diligence: but truly the lives of men are generally such, that they do things in order to heaven, things, I say, so few, so trifling, so unworthy, that they are not proportionable to the reward of a crown of oak or a yellow riband, the slender reward with which the Romans paid their soldiers for their extraordinary valor. True it is, that heaven is not, in a just sense of a commutation, a reward, but a gift, and an infinite favor: but yet it is not reached forth but to persons disposed by the conditions of God, which conditions when we pursue in kind, let us be very careful we do not fail of the mighty prize of our high calling, for want of degrees and just measures, the measures of zeal and a mighty love.

3. It is an office of prudence to serve God so, that we may, at the same time, preserve our lives and our estates, our interest and reputation, for ourselves and our relatives, so far as they can consist together. St. Paul, in the beginning of Christianity, was careful to instruct the forwardness and zeal of the new Christians into good husbandry, and to catechise the men into good trades, and the women into useful employments, that they might not be unprofitable. For Christian religion carrying us to heaven, does it by the way of a man, and by the body it

serves the soul, as by the soul it serves God; and, therefore, it endeavors to secure the body and its interest, that it may continue the opportunities of a crown, and prolong the stage in which we are to run for the mighty 'prize of our salvation:' and this is that part of prudence which is the defensative and guard of a Christian in the time of persecution, and it hath in it much of duty. He that, through an indiscreet zeal, casts himself into a needless danger, hath betrayed his life to tyranny, and tempts the sin of an enemy; he loses to God the service of many years, and cuts off himself from a fair opportunity of working his salvation, in the main parts of which we shall find a long life and very many years of reason to be little enough; he betrays the interest of his relatives, which he is bound to preserve; he disables himself of making 'provision for them of his own house;' and he that fails in this duty by his own fault 'is worse than an infidel:' and denies the faith, by such unseasonably dying, or being undone, which by that testimony he did intend gloriously to confess; he serves the ends of ambition and popular services, but not the sober ends of religion; he discourages the weak, and weakens the hands of the strong, and by upbraiding their weariness, tempts them to turn it into rashness or despair; he affrights strangers from entering into religion, while by such imprudence he shall represent it to be impossible, at the same time, to be wise and to be religious; he turns all the whole religion into a frowardness of dying or beggary, leaving no space for the parts and offices of a holy life, which, in times of persecution, are infinitely necessary for the advantages of the institution. But God hath provided better things for his servants: *Quem fata cogunt, ille cum venia est miser;* "he whom God by an inevitable necessity calls to sufferance, he hath leave to be undone;" and that ruin of his estate or loss of his life shall secure first a providence, then a crown.

> At si quis ultro se malis offert volens,
> Seque ipse torquet, perdere est dignus bona,
> Queis nescit uti.——Sen. Hipp. 440. Schr.

"But he that invites the cruelty of a tyrant by his own follies, or the indiscretions of an insignificant and impertinent zeal,

suffers as a wilful person, and enters into the parties and reward of fools." And this is the precept of our blessed Saviour, next after my text, 'Beware of men.' Use your prudence to the purposes of avoiding their snare. Τῶν θηρῶν βροτὸς μᾶλλον ἀνήμερος· "Man is the most harmful of all the wild beasts." 'Ye are sent as sheep among wolves; be, therefore, wise as serpents;' when you can avoid it, suffer not men to ride over your heads, or trample you under foot; that is the wisdom of serpents. And so must we; that is, by all just compliances, and toleration of all indifferent changes in which a duty is not destroyed, and in which we are not active, so preserve ourselves, that we might be permitted to live, and serve God, and to do advantages to religion; so purchasing time to do good in, by bending in all those flexures of fortune and condition which we cannot help, and which we do not set forward, and which we never did procure. And this is the direct meaning of St. Paul: 'See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil;'* that is, we are fallen into times that are troublesome, dangerous, persecuting, and afflictive; purchase as much respite as you can; buy or 'redeem the time' by all honest arts, by humility, by fair carriage and sweetnesses of society, by civility and a peaceful conversation, by good words and all honest offices, by praying for your persecutors, by patient sufferance of what is unavoidable. And when the tyrant draws you forth from all these guards and retirements, and offers violence to your duty, or tempts you to do a dishonest act, or to omit an act of obligation, then come forth into the theatre, and lay your necks down to the hangman's axe, and fear not to die the most shameful death of the cross or the gallows. For so have I known angels ascending and descending on those ladders; and the Lord of glory suffered shame and purchased honor on the cross. Thus we are 'to walk in wisdom towards them that are without, redeeming the time:'† for so St. Paul renews that permission or commandment; give them no just cause of offence; with all humility, and as occasion is offered, represent their duty, and invite them sweetly to felicities and virtue, but

* Eph. v. 15, 16. † Col. iv. 5.

do not, in ruder language, upbraid and reproach their baseness; and, when they are incorrigible, let them alone, lest, like cats, they run mad with the smell of delicious ointments. And, therefore, Pothinus, bishop of Lyons, being asked by the unbaptised president, "Who was the god of Christians?" answered Ἐὰν ᾖς ἄξιος, γνώσῃ· "If you be disposed with real and hearty desires of learning, what you ask you shall quickly know;" but, if your purpose be indirect, I shall not preach to you, to my hurt, and your no advantage. Thus the wisdom of the primitive Christians was careful not to profane the temples of the heathen, not to revile their false gods; and, when they were in duty to reprehend the follies of their religion, they chose to do it from their own writings, and as relaters of their own records: they fled from the fury of a persecution, they hid themselves in caves, and wandered about in disguises, and preached in private, and celebrated their synaxes and communions in grottos and retirements; and made it apper to all the world they were peaceable and obedient, charitable and patient, and at this price bought their time;

> Καιρὸς γὰρ, ὅσπερ ἀνδράσι
> Μέγιστος ἔργου παντός ἐστ' ἐπιστάτης.*

as knowing that, even in this sense, time was very precious, and the opportunity of giving glory to God by the offices of an excellent religion was not too dear a purchase at that rate. But then when the wolves had entered into the folds, and seized on a lamb, the rest fled, and used all the innocent arts of concealment. St. Athanasius being overtaken by his persecutors, but not known, and asked whether he saw Athanasius passing that way, pointed out forward with his finger, *Non longe abest Athanasius*, "the man is not far off," a swift footman will easily overtake him. And St. Paul divided the counsel of his judges, and made the Pharisees his parties by a witty insinuation of his own belief of the resurrection, which was not the main question, but an incident to the matter of his accusation. And when Plinius Secundus, in the face of a tyrant court, was pressed so invidiously to give his opinion concerning

* Soph. Electr. 75. Musgr.

a good man in banishment, and under the disadvantage of an unjust sentence, he diverted the snare of Marcus Regulus, by referring his answer to a competent judicatory, according to the laws; being pressed again, by offering a direct answer on a just condition, which he knew they would not accept; and, the third time, by turning the envy on the impertinent and malicious orator; that he won great honor, the honor of a severe honesty, and a witty man, and a prudent person. The thing I have noted, because it is a good pattern to represent the arts of honest evasion, and religious, prudent honesty; which any good man may transcribe and turn into his own instances, if any equal case should occur.

For, in this case the rule is easy; if we are commanded to be 'wise' and 'redeem our time,' that we serve God and religion, we must not use unlawful arts which set us back in the accounts of our time, no lying subterfuges, no betraying of a truth, no treachery to a good man, no insnaring of a brother, no secret renouncing of any part or proposition of our religion, no denying to confess the article when we are called to it. For when the primitive Christians had got a trick to give money for certificates that they had sacrificed to idols, though indeed they did not do it, but had corrupted the officers and ministers of state, they dishonored their religion, and were marked with the appellative of *libellatici*, "libellers;" and were excommunicated, and cast off from the society of Christians and the hopes of heaven, till they had returned to God by a severe repentance. *Optandum est, ut, quod libenter facis, diu facere possis;* "It is good to have long time to do that which we ought to do:" but to pretend that which we dare not do, and to say we have when we have not, if we know we ought not, is to dishonor the cause and the person too; it is expressly against confession of Christ, of which St. Paul saith, 'By the mouth confession is made unto salvation;' and our blessed Saviour, 'He that confesseth me before men, I will confess him before my heavenly Father;' and if here he refuseth to own me, I will not own him hereafter. It is also expressly against Christian fortitude and nobleness, and against the simplicity and sincerity of our religion, and it turns prudence into craft, and brings the devil to wait in the temple, and to minister to God; and it is a lesser

kind of apostasy. And it is well that the man is tempted no farther; for, if the persecutors could not be corrupted with money, it is odds but the complying man would; and though he would, with the money, hide his shame, yet he will not, with the loss of all his estate, redeem his religion. Ἀντηρῶς δ' ἔχει, εἰ τοῖς ἐμαυτῆς τὸν βίον σώζω κακοῖς· "Some men will lose their lives rather than a fair estate:" and do not almost all the armies in the world (I mean those that fight in the justest causes) pretend to fight and die for their lands and liberties? and there are too many also that will die twice, rather than be beggars once, although we all know that the second death is intolerable. Christian prudence forbids us to provoke a danger; and they were fond persons that ran to persecution, and, when the proconsul sat on the life and death, and made strict inquisition after Christians, went and offered themselves to die; and he was a fool, that, being in Portugal, ran to the priest as he elevated the host, and overthrew the mysteries, and openly defied the rites of that religion. God, when he sends a persecution, will pick out such persons whom he will have to die, and whom he will consign to banishment, and whom to poverty. In the mean time let us do our duty when we can, and as long as we can, and with as much strictness as we can; walking ἀκριβῶς (as the Apostle's phrase is), 'not prevaricating' in the least tittle; and then, if we can be safe with the arts of civil, innocent, inoffensive compliance, let us bless God for his permissions made to us, and his assistances in the using them. But if either we turn our zeal into the ambition of death, and the follies of an unnecessary beggary; or on the other side turn our prudence into craft and covetousness; to the first I say, that 'God hath no pleasure in fools;' to the latter, 'If you gain the whole world, and lose your own soul,' your loss is infinite and intolerable.

SERMON X.

PART II.

4. It is the office of Christian prudence so to order the affairs of our life, as that, in all the offices of our souls and conversation, we do honor and reputation to the religion we profess. For the follies and vices of the professors give great advantages to the adversary to speak reproachfully, and do alienate the hearts, and hinder the compliance of those undetermined persons, who are apt to be persuaded if their understandings be not prejudiced.

But as our necessary duty is bound on us by one ligament more, in order to the honor of the cause of God, so it particularly binds us to many circumstances, adjuncts, and parts of duty, which have no other commandment but the law of prudence. There are some sects of Christians which have some one constant indisposition, which, as a character, divides them from all others, and makes them reproved on all hands. Some are so suspicious and ill-natured, that, if a person of a facile nature and gentle disposition fall into their hands, he is presently soured, and made morose, unpleasant, and uneasy in his conversation. Others there are that do things so like to what themselves condemn, that they are forced to take sanctuary and labor in the mine of insignificant distinctions, to make themselves believe they are innocent; and, in the mean time, they offend all men else, and open the mouths of their adversaries to speak reproachful things, true or false, as it happens. And it requires a great wit to understand all the distinctions and devices thought of for legitimating the worshipping of images; and those people that are liberal in their excommunications, make men think they have reason to say, "their judges are proud, or self-willed, or covetous, or ill-natured people." These that are the faults of governors, and continued, are quickly derived on the sect, and cause a disreputation to the whole society and institution. And who can think that congregation to be a true branch of the Christian, which makes it their profession to

kill men to save their souls against their will, and against their understanding? who, calling themselves disciples of so meek a Master, do live like bears, on prey, and spoil, and blood? It is a huge dishonor to the sincerity of a man's purposes, to be too busy in fingering money in the matters of religion; and they that are zealous for their rights, and tame in their devotion, furious against sacrilege, and companions of drunkards, implacable against breakers of a canon, and careless and patient enough with them that break the fifth or sixth commandments of the decalogue, tell all the world their private sense is to preserve their own interest with scruple and curiosity, and leave God to take care for his.

Thus Christ reproved the Pharisees for 'straining at a gnat, and swallowing a camel;' the very representation of the manner and matter of fact discovers the vice by reproving the folly of it. They that are factious to get a rich proselyte, and think the poor not worth saving, dishonor their zeal, and teach men to call it covetousness: and though there may be a reason of prudence to desire one more than the other, because of a bigger efficacy the example of the one may have more than the other; yet it will quickly be discovered, if it be done by secular design; and the Scripture, that did not allow the preferring of a gay man before a poor saint in the matter of place, will not be pleased, that in the matter of souls, which are all equal, there should be a faction, and design, and an acceptation of persons. Never let sins pollute our religion with arts of the world, nor offer to support the ark with unhallowed hands, nor mingle false propositions with true, nor make religion a pretence to profit or preferment, nor do things which are like a vice; neither ever speak things dishonorable of God, nor abuse thy brother for God's sake; nor be solicitous and over-busy to recover thy own little things, neither always think it fit to lose thy charity by forcing thy brother to do justice; and all those things which are the outsides and faces, the garments and most discerned parts of religion, be sure that they be dressed according to all the circumstances of men, and by all the rules of common honesty and public reputation. Is it not a sad thing that the Jew should say, the Christians worship images? or that it should become a proverb, that "the Jew spends all in his pass-

over, the Moor in his marriage, and the Christian in his law-suits?" that what the first sacrifice to religion, and the second to public joy, we should spend in malice, covetousness, and revenge?

——— Pudet hæc opprobria nobis
Et dici potuisse, et non potuisse refelli.

But among ourselves also we serve the devil's ends, and minister to an eternal disunion, by saying and doing things which look unhandsomely. One sort of men is superstitious, fantastical, greedy of honor, and tenacious of propositions to fill the purse, and his religion is thought nothing but policy and opinion. Another says, "he hath a good religion," but he is the most indifferent and cold person in the world either to maintain it, or to live according to it. The one dresses the images of saints with fine clothes; the other lets the poor go naked, and disrobes the priests that minister in the religion. A third uses God worse than all this, and says of him such things that are scandalous even to an honest man, and such which would undo a good man's reputation. And a fourth, yet, endures no governor but himself, and pretends to set up Christ, and make himself his lieutenant. And a fifth hates all government. And from all this it comes to pass, that it is hard for a man to choose his side; and he that chooses wisest, takes that which hath in it least hurt; but some he must endure, or live without communion: and every church of one denomination is, or hath been, too incurious of preventing infamy or disreputation to their confessions.

One thing I desire should be observed, that here the question being concerning prudence, and the matter of doing reputation to our religion, it is not enough to say, we can with learning justify all that we do, and make all whole with three or four distinctions: for possibly that man that went to visit the Corinthian Lais, if he had been asked why he dishonored himself with so unhandsome an entrance, might find an excuse to legitimate his act, or at least to make himself believe well of his own person; but he that intends to do himself honor, must take care that he be not suspected, that he give no occasion of reproachful language; for fame and honor is a nice

thing, tender as a woman's chastity, or like the face of the purest mirror, which a foul breath, or an unwholesome air, or a watery eye can sully, and the beauty is lost, although it be not dashed in pieces. When a man, or a sect, is put to answer for themselves in the matter of reputation, they, with their distinctions, wipe the glass, and at last can do nothing but make it appear it was not broken; but their very abstersion and laborious excuses confess it was foul and faulty. We must know that all sorts of men, and all sects of Christians, have not only the mistakes of men and their prejudices to contest withal, but the calumnies and aggravation of devils; and, therefore, it will much ease our account of doomsday, if we are now so prudent that men will not be offended here, nor the devils furnished with a libel in the day of our great account.

To this rule appertains, that we be curious in observing the circumstances of men, and satisfying all their reasonable expectations, and doing things at that rate of charity and religion, which they are taught to be prescribed in the institution. There are some things which are indecencies rather than sins, such which may become a just heathen, but not a holy Christian; a man of the world, but not a man 'professing godliness:' because when the greatness of the man, or the excellency of the law, hath engaged us on great severity or an exemplary virtue, whatsoever is less than it, renders the man unworthy of the religion, or the religion unworthy its fame. Men think themselves abused, and, therefore, return shame for payment. We never read of an Apostle that went to law; and it is but reasonable to expect, that, of all men in the world, Christians should not be such fighting people, and clergymen should not command armies, and kings should not be drunk, and subjects should not strike princes for justice, and an old man should not be youthful in talk or in his habit, and women should not swear, and great men should not lie, and a poor man should not oppress; for, besides the sin of some of them, there is an indecency in all of them; and by being contrary to the end of an office, or the reputation of a state, or the sobrieties of a graver or sublimed person, they asperse the religion as insufficient to keep the persons within the bounds of fame and common reputation.

But, above all things, those sects of Christians whose professed doctrine brings destruction and diminution to government, give the most intolerable scandal and dishonor to the institution; and it had been impossible that Christianity should have prevailed over the wisdom and power of the Greeks and Romans, if it had not been humble to superiors, patient of injuries, charitable to the needy, a great exacter of obedience to kings, even to heathens, that they might be won and convinced; and to persecutors, that they might be sweetened in their anger, or upbraided for their cruel injustice: for so doth the humble vine creep at the foot of an oak, and leans on its lowest base, and begs shade and protection, and leave to grow under its branches, and to give and take mutual refreshment, and pay a friendly influence for a mighty patronage; and they grow and dwell together, and are the most remarkable of friends and married pairs of all the leafy nation. Religion of itself is soft, easy, and defenceless; and God hath made it grow up with empire, and lean on the arms of kings, and it cannot well grow alone; and if it shall, like the ivy, suck the heart of the oak, on whose body it grew and was supported, it will be pulled down from its usurped eminence, and fire and shame shall be its portion. We cannot complain, if princes arm against those Christians, who, if they were suffered to preach, will disarm the princes; and it will be hard to persuade that kings are bound to protect and nourish those that will prove ministers of their own exauctoration: and no prince can have juster reason to forbid, nor any man have greater reason to deny, communion to a family, than when they go about to destroy the power of the one, or corrupt the duty of the other. The particulars of this rule are very many: I shall only instance in one more, because it is of great concernment to the public interest of Christendom.

There are some persons, whose religion is hugely disgraced, because they change their propositions, according as their temporal necessities or advantages do return. They that, in their weakness and beginning, cry out against all violence as against persecution, and from being sufferers swell up till they be prosperous, and from thence to power, and at last to tyranny, and then suffer none but themselves, and trip up those feet which

they humbly kissed, that themselves should not be trampled on;—these men tell all the world, that, at first, they were pusillanimous, or at last outrageous; that their doctrine at first served their fear, and at last served their rage, and that they did not at all intend to serve God: and then who shall believe them in any thing else? Thus some men declaim against the faults of governors, that themselves may govern; and when the power is in their hands, what was a fault in others, is in them necessity; as if a sin could be hallowed for coming into their hands. Some Greeks, at Florence, subscribed the article of purgatory, and condemned it in their own dioceses: and the king's supremacy in causes ecclesiastical was earnestly defended against the pretences of the bishop of Rome; and yet when he was thrust out, some men were, and are violent to submit the king to their consistories; as if he were supreme in defiance of the pope, and yet not supreme over his own clergy. These articles are managed too suspiciously.

Omnia si perdas, famam servare memento:

"You lose all the advantages to your cause, if you lose your reputation."

5. It is a duty also of Christian prudence, that the teachers of others by authority, or reprovers of their vices by charity, should also make their persons apt to do it without objection.

Loripedem rectus derideat, Æthiopem albus.*

"No man can endure the Gracchi preaching against sedition, nor Verres prating against thievery," or Milo against homicide: and if Herod had made an oration of humility, or Antiochus of mercy, men would have thought it had been a design to evil purposes. He that means to gain a soul, must not make his sermon an ostentation of his eloquence, but the law of his own life. If a grammarian should speak solecisms, or a musician sing like a bittern, he becomes ridiculous for offending in the faculty he professes. So it is in them who minister to the conversion of souls: if they fail in their own life, when they profess to instruct another, they are defective in their proper part,

* Juv. ii. 11.

and are unskilful to all their purposes; and the cardinal of Crema did, with ill success, tempt the English priests to quit their chaste marriages, when he himself was deprehended in unchaste embraces. For good counsel seems to be unhallowed, when it is reached forth by an impure hand; and he can ill be believed by another, whose life so confutes his rules, that it is plain he does not believe himself. Those churches that are zealous for souls, must send into their ministries men so innocent, that evil persons may have no excuse to be any longer vicious. When Gorgias went about to persuade the Greeks to be at peace, he had eloquence enough to do advantage to his cause, and reason enough to press it: but Melanthius was glad to put him off, by telling him that he was not fit to persuade peace, who could not agree at home with his wife, nor make his wife agree with her maid; and he that could not make peace between three single persons, was unapt to prevail for the reuniting fourteen or fifteen commonwealths. And this thing St. Paul remarks, by enjoining that a bishop should be chosen such a one as knew well to rule his own house; or else he is not fit to rule the church of God. And when thou persuadest thy brother to be chaste, let him not deride thee for thy intemperance; and it will ill become thee to be severe against an idle servant, if thou thyself beest useless to the public; and every notorious vice is infinitely against the spirit of government, and "depresses the man to an evenness" with common persons: *Facinus quos inquinat æquat.* To reprove belongs to a superior; and as innocence gives a man advantage over his brother, giving him an artificial and adventitious authority; so the follies and scandals of a public and governing man destroy the efficacy of that authority that is just and natural. Now this is directly an office of Christian prudence, that good offices and great authority become not ineffective by ill conduct.

Hither also it appertains, that in public or private reproofs we observe circumstances of time.—of place,—of person,—of disposition. The vices of a king are not to be opened publicly, and princes must not be reprehended as a man reproves his servant; but by categorical propositions, by abstracted declamations, by reprehensions of a crime in its single

nature, in private, with humility and arts of insinuation; and it is against Christian prudence, not only to use a prince or great personage with common language, but it is as great an imprudence to pretend, for such a rudeness, the examples of the prophets in the Old Testament. For their case was extraordinary, their calling peculiar, their commission special, their spirit miraculous, their authority great as to that single mission; they were like thunder or the trump of God, sent to do that office plainly, for the doing of which in that manner, God had given no commission to any ordinary minister. And, therefore, we never find, that the priests did use that freedom, which the prophets were commanded to use, whose very words being put into their mouths, it was not to be esteemed a human act, or a lawful manner of doing an ordinary office; neither could it become a precedent to them, whose authority is precarious and without coercion, whose spirit is allayed with Christian graces and duties of humility, whose words are not prescribed, but left to the conduct of prudence, as it is to be advised by public necessities and private circumstances, in ages where all things are so ordered, that what was fit and pious amongst the old Jews, would be uncivil and intolerable to the latter Christians. He also that reproves a vice, should also treat the persons with honor and civilities, and by fair opinions and sweet addresses place the man in the regions of modesty, and the confines of grace, and the fringes of repentance. For some men are more restrained by an imperfect feared shame, so long as they think there is a reserve of reputation which they may secure, than they can be with all the furious declamations of the world, when themselves are represented ugly and odious, full of shame, and actually punished with the worst of temporal evils, beyond which he fears not here to suffer, and from whence, because he knows it will be hard for him to be redeemed by an after-game of reputation, it makes him desperate and incorrigible by fraternal correption.

A zealous man hath not done his duty, when he calls his brother "drunkard" and "beast;" and he may better do it by telling him he is a man, and sealed with God's Spirit, and honored with the title of a Christian, and is, or ought to be, reputed as a discreet person by his friends, and a governor of a

family, or a guide in his country, or an example to many, and that it is huge pity so many excellent things should be sullied and allayed with what is so much below all this. Then a reprover does his duty, when he is severe against the vice, and charitable to the man, and careful of his reputation, and sorry for his real dishonor, and observant of his circumstances, and watchful to surprise his affections and resolutions there, where they are most tender and most tenable: and men will not be in love with virtue, whither they are forced with rudeness and incivilities; but they love to dwell there whither they are invited friendly, and where they are treated civilly, and feasted liberally, and led by the hand and the eye to honor and felicity.

6. It is a duty of Christian prudence not to suffer our souls to walk alone, unguarded, unguided, and more single than in other actions and interests of our lives, which are of less concernment. *Væ soli et singulari*, said the wise man; "Wo to him that is alone." And if we consider, how much God hath done to secure our souls, and after all that, how many ways there are for a man's soul to miscarry, we should think it very necessary to call to a spiritual man to take us by the hand to walk in the ways of God, and to lead us in all the regions of duty, and through the labyrinths of danger. For God, who best loves and best knows how to value our soul, set a price no less on it than the life-blood of his holy Son; he hath treated it with variety of usages, according as the world had new guises and new necessities; he abates it with punishment, to make us avoid greater; he shortened our life, that we might live for ever; he turns sickness into virtue; he brings good out of evil, he turns enmities to advantages, our very sins into repentances and stricter walking; he defeats all the follies of men and all the arts of the devil, and lays snares and uses violence to secure obedience; he sends prophets and priests to invite us and to threaten us to felicities; he restrains us with laws, and he bridles us with honor and shame, reputation and society, friends and foes; he lays hold on us by the instruments of all the passions; he is enough to fill our love; he satisfies our hope; he affrights us with fear; he gives us part of our reward in hand, and entertains all our faculties with the

promises of an infinite and glorious portion; he curbs our affections; he directs our wills; he instructs our understandings with Scriptures, with perpetual sermons, with good books, with frequent discourses, with particular observations and great experience, with accidents and judgments, with rare events of providence and miracles; he sends his angels to be our guard, and to place us in opportunities of virtue, and to take us off from ill company and places of danger, to set us near to good examples; he gives us his Holy Spirit, and he becomes to us a principle of a mighty grace, descending on us in great variety and undiscerned events, besides all those parts of it which men have reduced to a method and an art: and, after all this, he forgives us infinite irregularities, and spares us every day, and still expects, and passes by, and waits all our days, still watching to do us good, and to save that soul which he knows is so precious, one of the chiefest of the works of God, and an image of divinity. Now from all these arts and mercies of God, besides that we have infinite reason to adore his goodness, we have also a demonstration that we ought to do all that possibly we can, and extend all our faculties, and watch all our opportunities, and take in all assistances, to secure the interest of our soul, for which God is pleased to take such care, and use so many arts for its security. If it were not highly worth it, God would not do it; if it were not all of it necessary, God would not do it. But if it be worth it, and all of it be necessary, why should we not labor in order to this great end? If it be worth so much to God, it is so much more to us: for if we perish, his felicity is undisturbed; but we are undone, infinitely undone. It is, therefore, worth taking in a spiritual guide; so far we are gone.

But because we are in the question of prudence, we must consider whether it be necessary to do so: for every man thinks himself wise enough as to the conduct of his soul, and managing of his eternal interest; and divinity is every man's trade, and the Scriptures speak our own language, and the commandments are few and plain, and the laws are the measure of justice; and if I say my prayers, and pay my debts, my duty is soon summed up; and thus we usually make our accounts for eternity, and at this rate only take care for heaven. But let a man be ques-

tioned for a portion of his estate, or have his life shaken with diseases; then it will not be enough to employ one agent, or to send for a good woman to minister a potion of the juices of her country garden; but the ablest lawyers, and the skilfullest physicians, and the advice of friends, and huge caution and diligent attendances, and a curious watching concerning all the accidents and little passages of our disease. And truly a man's life and health is worth all that and much more, and, in many cases, it needs it all.

But then is the soul the only safe and the only trifling thing about us? Are there not a thousand dangers, and ten thousand difficulties, and innumerable possibilities of a misadventure? Are not all the congregations in the world divided in their doctrines, and all of them call their own way necessary, and most of them call all the rest damnable? We had need of a wise instructor and a prudent choice, at our first entrance and election of our side; and when we are well in the matter of faith for its object and institution, all the evils of myself, and all the evils of the church, and all the good that happens to evil men, every day of danger, the periods of sickness, and the day of death, are days of tempest and storm, and our faith will suffer shipwreck unless it be strong, and supported, and directed. But who shall guide the vessel when a stormy passion or a violent imagination transports the man? Who shall awaken his reason, and charm his passion into slumber and instruction? How shall a man make his fears confident, and allay his confidence with fear, and make the allay with just proportions, and steer evenly between the extremes, or call on his sleeping purposes, or actuate his choices, or bind him to reason in all his wanderings and ignorances, in his passions and mistakes? For suppose a man of great skill and great learning in the ways of religion; yet if he be abused by accident or by his own will, who shall then judge his cases of conscience, and awaken his duty, and renew his holy principle, and actuate his spiritual powers? for physicians, that prescribe to others, do not minister to themselves in cases of danger and violent sicknesses; and in matter of distemperature we shall not find that books alone will do all the work of a spiritual physician, more than of a natural. I will not go about to increase the dangers and difficulties of the

soul, to represent the assistance of a spiritual man to be necessary. But of this I am sure, our not understanding and our not considering our soul, makes us first to neglect, and then many times to lose it. But is not every man an unequal judge in his own case? and therefore the wisdom of God, and the laws have appointed tribunals, and judges, and arbitrators. And that men are partial in the matter of souls, it is infinitely certain, because amongst those millions of souls that perish, not one in ten thousand but believes himself in a good condition; and all the sects of Christians think they are in the right, and few are patient to inquire whether they be or no. Then add to this, that the questions of souls, being clothed with circumstances of matter and particular contingency, are or may be infinite; and most men are so unfortunate, that they have so entangled their cases of conscience, that there where they have done something good, it may be they have mingled half a dozen evils: and, when interests are confounded, and governments altered, and power strives with right, and insensibly passes into right, and duty to God would fain be reconciled with duty to our relatives, will it not be more than necessary that we should have some one that we may inquire of after the way to heaven, which is now made intricate by our follies and inevitable accidents? But by what instrument shall men alone, and in their own cases, be able to discern the spirit of truth from the spirit of illusion, just confidence from presumption, fear from pusillanimity? Are not all the things and assistances in the world little enough to defend us against pleasure and pain, the two great fountains of temptation? Is it not harder to cure a lust than to cure a fever? And are not the deceptions and follies of men, and the arts of the devil, and enticements of the world, and the deceptions of a man's own heart, and the evils of sin, more evil and more numerous than the sicknesses and diseases of any one man? And if a man perishes in his soul, is it not infinitely more sad than if he could rise from his grave and die a thousand deaths over? Thus we are advanced a second step in this prudential motive: God used many arts to secure our soul's interest; and there are infinite dangers and infinite ways of miscarriage in the soul's interest: and, therefore, there is great necessity God should do all those mercies of security,

and that we should do all the under-ministries we can in this great work.

But what advantage shall we receive by a spiritual guide? Much, every way. For this is the way that God hath appointed, who, in every age, hath sent a succession of spiritual persons, whose office is to minister in holy things, and to be 'stewards of God's household,' 'shepherds of the flock,' 'dispensers of the mysteries,' under-mediators, and ministers of prayer; preachers of the law, expounders of questions, monitors of duty, conveyances of blessings; and that which is a good discourse in the mouth of another man, is, from them, an ordinance of God; and besides its natural efficacy and persuasion, it prevails by the way of blessing, by the reverence of his person, by divine institution, by the excellency of order, by the advantages of opinion and assistances of reputation, by the influence of the Spirit, who is the president of such ministries, and who is appointed to all Christians, according to the dispensation that is appointed to them; to the people, in their obedience and frequenting of the ordinance; to the priest, in his ministry and public and private offices. To which also I add this consideration, that as the holy sacraments are hugely effective to spiritual purposes, not only because they convey a blessing to the worthy suscipients, but because men cannot be worthy suscipients unless they do many excellent acts of virtue, in order to a previous disposition; so that in the whole conjunction and transaction of affairs, there is good done by way of proper efficacy and divine blessing: so it is in following the conduct of a spiritual man, and consulting with him in the matter of our souls; we cannot do it unless we consider our souls, and make religion our business, and examine our present state, and consider concerning our danger, and watch and design for our advantages, which things of themselves will set a man much forwarder in the way of godliness: besides that naturally every man will less dare to act a sin for which he knows he shall feel a present shame in his discoveries made to the spiritual guide, the man that is made the witness of his conversation; Τοὺς ἐκ Διὸς γὰρ εἰκός ἐστι πάνθ' ὁρᾷν· "Holy men ought to know all things from God,"* and that relate to God, in order to the con-

* Sophocl.

duct of souls. And there is nothing to be said against this, if we do not suffer the devil in this affair to abuse us, as he does many people in their opinions, teaching men to suspect there is a design and a snake under the plantain. But so may they suspect kings when they command obedience, or the Levites when they read the law of tithes, or parents when they teach their children temperance, or tutors when they watch their charge. However, it is better to venture the worst of the design, than to lose the best of the assistance: and he that guides himself, hath much work and much danger; but he that is under the conduct of another, his work is easy, little, and secure; it is nothing but diligence and obedience: and though it be a hard thing to rule well, yet nothing is easier than to follow and be obedient.

SERMON X.

PART III.

7. As it is a part of Christian prudence to take into the conduct of our souls a spiritual man for a guide; so it is also of great concernment that we be prudent in the choice of him, whom we are to trust in so great an interest.

Concerning which it will be impossible to give characters and significations particular enough to enable a choice, without the interval-assistances of prayer, experience, and the grace of God. He that describes a man, can tell you the color of his hair, his stature and proportion, and describe some general lines, enough to distinguish him from a Cyclops or a Saracen; but when you chance to see the man, you will discover figures or little features, of which the description had produced in you no phantasm or expectation. And in the exterior significations of a sect, there are more semblances than in men's faces, and greater uncertainty in the signs; and what is faulty, strives so craftily to act the true and proper images of things; and the more they are defective in circumstances, the more curious they

are in forms; and they also use such arts of gaining proselytes, which are of most advantage towards an effect, and, therefore, such which the true Christian ought to pursue, and the Apostles actually did; and they strive to follow their patterns in arts of persuasion, not only because they would seem like them, but because they can have none so good, so effective to their purposes; that it follows, that it is not more a duty to take care that we be not corrupted with false teachers, than that we be not abused with false signs: for we as well find a good man teaching a false proposition, as a good cause managed by ill men; and a holy cause is not always dressed with healthy symptoms, nor is there a cross always set on the doors of those congregations who are infected with the plague of heresy.

When St. John was to separate false teachers from true, he took no other course but to mark the doctrine which was of God, and that should be the mark of cognisance to distinguish right shepherds from robbers and invaders: 'Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; he that denieth it, is not of God.' By this, he bids his scholars to avoid the present sects of Ebion, Cerinthus, Simon Magus, and such other persons as denied that Christ was at all before he came, or that he came really in the flesh and proper humanity. This is a clear note; and they that conversed with St. John, or believed his doctrine, were sufficiently instructed in the present questions. But this note will signify nothing to us; for all sects of Christians 'confess Jesus Christ come in the flesh,' and the following sects did avoid that rock, over which a great Apostle had hung out so plain a lantern.

In the following ages of the church, men have been so curious to signify misbelievers, that they have invented and observed some signs, which, indeed, in some cases were true, real appendages of false believers; but yet such which were also, or might be, common to them with good men and members of the catholic church. Some few I shall remark, and give a short account of them, that by removing the uncertain, we may fix our inquiries and direct them by certain significations, lest this art of prudence turn into folly and faction, error and secular design.

1. Some men distinguish error from truth by calling their adversaries' doctrine, "new and of yesterday." And certainly this is a good sign, if it be rightly applied; for since all Christian doctrine is that which Christ taught his church, and the Spirit enlarged or expounded, and the Apostles delivered; we are to begin the Christian era for our faith, and parts of religion by the period of their preaching; our account begins then, and whatsoever is contrary to what they taught is new and false, and whatsoever is besides what they taught is no part of our religion;—and then no man can be prejudiced for believing it or not;—and if it be adopted into the confessions of the church, the proposition is always so uncertain, that it is not to be admitted into the faith; and, therefore, if it be old in respect of our days, it is not, therefore, necessary to be believed; if it be new, it may be received into opinion according to its probability, and no sects nor interests are to be divided on such accounts. This only I desire to be observed, that when a truth returns from banishment by a *postliminium*, if it was from the first, though the holy fire hath been buried, or the river ran under ground, yet we do not call that new; since newness is not to be accounted of by a proportion to our short-lived memories, or to the broken records and fragments of story left after the inundation of barbarism and war, and change of kingdoms, and corruption of authors; but, by its relation to the fountain of our truths, and the birth of our religion under our fathers in Christ, the holy Apostles and disciples. A camel was a new thing to them that saw it in the fable, but yet it was created as soon as a cow or the domestic creatures; and some people are apt to call every thing new which they never heard of before, as if all religion were to be measured by the standards of their observation or country customs. Whatsoever was not taught by Christ or his Apostles, though it came in by Papias or Dionysius, by Arius or Liberius, is certainly new as to our account; and whatsoever is taught to us by the doctors of the present age, if it can show its test from the beginning of our period for revelation, is not to be called new, though it be pressed with a new zeal, and discoursed of by unheard-of arguments; that is, though men be ignorant and need to learn it, yet it is not therefore new or unnecessary.

2. Some would have false teachers sufficiently signified by a name, or the owning of a private appellative, as of Papist, Lutheran, Calvinist, Zuinglian, Socinian; and think it enough to denominate them not of Christ, if they are called by the name of a man. And, indeed, the thing is in itself ill: but then, if by this mark we shall esteem false teachers sufficiently signified, we must follow no man, no church, nor no communion; for all are, by their adversaries, marked with an appellative of separation and singularity, and yet themselves are tenacious of a good name, such as they choose, or such as is permitted to them by fame, and the people, and a natural necessity of making a distinction. Thus the Donatists called themselves "the Flock of God," and the Novatians called the Catholics "Traditors," and the Eustathians called themselves "Catholics;" and the worshippers of images made "Iconoclast" to be a name of scorn; and men made names as they listed, or as the fate of the market went. And if a doctor preaches a doctrine which another man likes not, but preaches the contradictory, he that consents, and he that refuses, have each of them a teacher; by whose name, if they please to wrangle, they may be signified. It was so in the Corinthian church, with this only difference, that they divided themselves by names which signified the same religion; 'I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I am of Peter, and I of Christ.' These Apostles were ministers of Christ, and so does every teacher, new or old, among the Christians pretend himself to be. Let that, therefore, be examined; if he ministers to the truth of Christ and the religion of his Master, let him be entertained a servant of the Lord; but, if an appellative be taken from his name, there is a faction commenced in it, and there is a fault in the man, if there be none in the doctrine; but that the doctrine be true or false, to be received or to be rejected, because of the name, is accidental and extrinsical, and, therefore, not to be determined by this sign.

3. Amongst some men a sect is sufficiently thought to be reproved, if it subdivides and breaks into little fractions, or changes its own opinions. Indeed, if it declines its own doctrine, no man hath reason to believe them on their word, or to take them on the stock of reputation, which, themselves being

judges, they have forfeited and renounced in the changing that which at first they obtruded passionately. And therefore in this case there is nothing to be done, but to believe the men so far as they have reason to believe themselves; that is, to consider when they prove what they say; and they that are able to do so, are not persons in danger to be seduced by a bare authority unless they list themselves; for others that sink under an unavoidable prejudice, God will take care for them, if they be good people, and their case shall be considered by and by. But for the other part of the sign, when men fall out among themselves for other interests or opinions, it is no argument that they are in an error concerning that doctrine, which they all unitedly teach or condemn respectively; but it hath in it some probability, that their union is a testimony of truth, as certainly as that their fractions are a testimony of their zeal, or honesty, or weakness,—as it happens. And if we Christians be too decretory in this instance, it will be hard for any of us to keep a Jew from making use of it against the whole religion, which, from the days of the Apostles, hath been rent into innumerable sects and undersects, springing from mistake or interest, from the arts of the devil or the weakness of man. But from hence we may make an advantage in the way of prudence, and become sure that all that doctrine is certainly true, in which the generality of Christians, who are divided in many things, yet do constantly agree: and that that doctrine is also sufficient, since it is certain that because in all communions and churches there are some very good men, that do all their duty to the getting of truth, God will not fail in any thing that is necessary to them that honestly and heartily desire to obtain it; and therefore if they rest in the heartiness of that, and live accordingly, and superinduce nothing to the destruction of that, they have nothing to do but to rely on God's goodness, and if they perish it is certain they cannot help it; and that is demonstration enough that they cannot perish, considering the justness and goodness of our Lord and Judge.

4. Whoever break the bands of a society or communion, and go out from that congregation in whose confession they are baptised, do an intolerable scandal to their doctrine and persons, and give suspicious men reason to decline their assemblies,

and not to choose them at all for any thing of their authority or outward circumstances. And St. Paul bids the Romans to 'mark them that cause divisions and offences:' but the following words make their caution prudent and practicable, 'contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them;' they that recede from the doctrine which they have learned, they cause the offence; and if they also obtrude this on their congregations, they also make the division. For it is certain, if we receive any doctrine contrary to what Christ gave and the Apostles taught, for the authority of any man, then we 'call men master,' and leave 'our Master which is in heaven;' and in that case we must separate from the congregation, and adhere to Christ. But this is not to be done unless the case be evident and notorious. But as it is hard that the public doctrine of a church should be rifled, and misunderstood, and reproved, and rejected, by any of her wilful or ignorant sons and daughters; so it is also as hard that they should be bound not to see, when the case is plain and evident. There may be mischiefs on both sides; but the former sort of evils men may avoid if they will; for they may be humble and modest, and entertain better opinions of their superiors than of themselves, and in doubtful things, give them the honor of a just opinion; and if they do not do so, that evil will be their own private; for, that it become not public, the king and the bishop are to take care. But for the latter sort of evil, it will certainly become universal; if, I say, an authoritative false doctrine be imposed, and is to be accepted accordingly; for then all men shall be bound to profess against their conscience, that is, 'with their mouths not to confess unto salvation, what with their hearts they believe unto righteousness.' The best way of remedying both the evils is, that governors lay no burden of doctrines or laws but what are necessary or very profitable; and that inferiors do not contend for things unnecessary, nor call any thing necessary that is not; till then there will be evils on both sides. And although the governors are to carry the question in the point of law, reputation, and public government, yet as to God's judicature they will bear the bigger load, who in his right do him an injury, and by the impresses of his authority, destroy his truth. But, in this case also, although separating

be a suspicious thing and intolerable, unless it be when a sin is imposed; yet to separate is also accidental to truth, for some men separate with reason, some men against reason. Therefore here all the certainty that is in the thing, is when the truth is secured, and all the security to the men will be in the humility of their persons, and the heartiness and simplicity of their intention, and diligence of inquiry. The church of England had reason to separate from the confession and practices of Rome in many particulars; and yet if her children separate from her, they may be unreasonable and impious.

5. The ways of direction which we have from holy Scripture, to distinguish false Apostles from true, are taken from their doctrine, or their lives. That of the doctrine is the more sure way, if we can hit on it; but that also is the thing signified, and needs to have other signs. St. John and St. Paul took this way, for they were able to do it infallibly. 'All that confess Jesus incarnate, are of God,' said St. John. Those men that deny it are heretics; avoid them. And St. Paul bids to 'observe them that cause divisions and offences against the doctrine delivered;' them also avoid that do so. And we might do so as easily as they, if the world would only make their *depositum* that doctrine which they delivered to all men, that is, "the creed;" and superinduce nothing else, but suffer Christian faith to rest in its own perfect simplicity, unmingled with arts, and opinions, and interests. This course is plain and easy, and I will not intricate it with more words, but leave it directly in its own truth and certainty, with this only direction, that when we are to choose our doctrine or our side, we take that which is in the plain unexpounded words of Scripture; for in that only our religion can consist. Secondly, choose that which is most advantageous to a holy life, to the proper graces of a Christian, to humility, to charity, to forgiveness and alms, to obedience and complying with governments, to the honor of God and the exaltation of his attributes, and to the conservation and advantages of the public societies of men; and this last St. Paul directs, 'Let us be careful to maintain good works for necessary uses:' for he that heartily pursues these proportions, cannot be an ill man, though he were accidentally, and in the particular explications, deceived.

6. But because this is an act of wisdom rather than prudence, and supposes science or knowlege rather than experience, therefore it concerns the prudence of a Christian to observe the practice and the rules of practice, their lives and pretences, the designs and colors, the arts of conduct and gaining proselytes, which their doctors and catechists do use in order to their purposes, and in their ministry about souls. For although many signs are uncertain, yet some are infallible, and some are highly probable.

7. Therefore those teachers that pretend to be guided by a private spirit, are certainly false doctors. I remember what Simmias in Plutarch tells concerning Socrates, that if he heard any man say he saw a divine vision, he presently esteemed him vain and proud; but if he pretended only to have heard a voice, or the word of God, he listened to that religiously, and would inquire of him with curiosity. There was some reason in his fancy; for God does not communicate himself by the eye to men, but by the ear: 'Ye saw no figure, but ye heard a voice,' said Moses to the people concerning God. And therefore if any man pretends to speak the word of God, we will inquire concerning it; the man may the better be heard, because he may be certainly reproved if he speaks amiss; but if he pretends to visions and revelations, to a private spirit, and a mission extraordinary, the man is proud and unlearned, vicious and impudent. 'No Scripture is of private interpretation,' saith St. Peter, that is, "private emission" or "declaration." God's words were delivered indeed by single men, but such as were publicly designed prophets, remarked with a known character, approved of by the high priest and Sanhedrim, endued with a public spirit, and his doctrines were always agreeable to the other Scriptures. But if any man pretends now to the Spirit, either it must be a private or public. If it be private, it can but be useful to himself alone, and it may cozen him too, if it be not assisted by the spirit of a public man. But if it be a public spirit, it must enter in at the public door of ministerings and divine ordinances, of God's grace and man's endeavor: it must be subject to the prophets; it is discernible and judicable by them, and therefore may be rejected, and then it must pretend no longer. For he that will pretend to an extraordinary

spirit, and refuses to be tried by the ordinary ways, must either prophesy or work miracles, or must have a voice from heaven to give him testimony. The prophets in the Old Testament, and the Apostles in the New, and Christ between both, had no other way of extraordinary probation; and they that pretend to any thing extraordinary, cannot, ought not to be believed, unless they have something more than their own word: 'If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true,' said Truth itself, our blessed Lord. But, secondly, they that intend to teach by an extraordinary spirit, if they pretend to teach according to Scripture, must be examined by the measures of Scripture, and then their extraordinary must be judged by the ordinary spirit, and stands or falls by the rules of every good man's religion, and public government; and then we are well enough. But if they speak any thing against Scripture, it is the spirit of antichrist, and the spirit of the devil: 'For if an angel from heaven' (he certainly is a spirit) 'preach any other doctrine, let him be accursed.'

But this pretence of a single and extraordinary spirit is nothing else but the spirit of pride, error, and delusion; a snare to catch easy and credulous souls, which are willing to die for a gay word and a distorted face; it is the parent of folly and giddy doctrine, impossible to be proved, and, therefore, useless to all purposes of religion, reason, or sober counsels; it is like an invisible color, or music without a sound; it is, and indeed is so intended to be, a direct overthrow of order, and government, and public ministries: it is bold to say any thing, and resolved to prove nothing; it imposes on willing people after the same manner that oracles and the lying demons did of old time, abusing men, not by proper efficacy of its own, but because the men love to be abused: it is a great disparagement to the sufficiency of Scripture, and asperses the Divine Providence, for giving so many ages of the church an imperfect religion, expressly against the truth of their words, who said, they 'had declared the whole truth of God,' and 'told all the will of God:' and it is an affront to the Spirit of God, the Spirit of wisdom and knowlege, of order, and public ministries. But the will furnishes out malice, and the understanding sends out levity, and they marry, and produce a fantastic dream; and the daughter, sucking wind instead of 'the milk of the

word,' grows up to madness, and the spirit of reprobation. Besides all this, an extraordinary spirit is extremely unnecessary; and God does not give emissions and miracles from heaven to no purpose, and to no necessities of his church; for the supplying of which he hath given apostles and evangelists, prophets and pastors, bishops and priests, the spirit of ordination and the spirit of instruction, catechists and teachers, arts and sciences, Scriptures and a constant succession of expositors, the testimony of churches, and a constant line of tradition, or delivery of apostolical doctrine, in all things necessary to salvation. And, after all this, to have a fungus arise from the belly of mud and darkness, and nourish a glow-worm, that shall challenge to outshine the lantern of God's word, and all the candles which God set on a hill, and all that the Spirit hath set on the candlesticks, and all the stars of Christ's right hand, is to annul all the excellent, established, orderly, and certain effects of the Spirit of God, and to worship the false fires of the night. He, therefore, that will follow a guide that leads him by an extraordinary spirit, shall go an extraordinary way, and have a strange fortune, and a singular religion, and a portion by himself, a great way off from the common inheritance of the saints, who are all led by the Spirit of God, and have one heart and one mind, one faith and one hope, the same baptism, and the helps of the ministry, leading them to the common country, which is the portion of all that are the sons of adoption, consigned by the Spirit of God, the earnest of their inheritance.

Concerning the pretence of a private spirit for interpretation of the confessed doctrine of God, (the holy Scriptures,) it will not so easily come into this question of choosing our spiritual guides; because every person that can be candidate in this office, that can be chosen to guide others, must be a public man, that is, of a holy calling, sanctified or separate publicly to the office; and then to interpret is part of his calling and employment, and to do so is the work of a public spirit; he is ordained and designed, he is commanded and enabled to do it: and in this there is no other caution to be interposed, but that the more public the man is, of the more authority his interpretation is; and he comes nearer to a law of order, and in the

matter of government is to be observed: but the more holy and the more learned the man is, his interpretation in matter of question is more likely to be true; and, though less to be pressed as to the public confession, yet it may be more effective to a private persuasion, provided it be done without scandal, or lessening the authority, or disparagement to the more public person.

3. Those are to be suspected for evil guides, who, to get authority among the people, pretend a great zeal, and use a bold liberty in reproving princes and governors, nobility and prelates; for such homilies cannot be the effects of a holy religion, which lay a snare for authority, and undermine power, and discontent the people, and make them bold against kings, and immodest in their own stations, and trouble the government. Such men may speak a truth, or teach a true doctrine; for every such design does not unhallow the truth of God: but they take some truths, and force them to minister to an evil end. But, therefore, mingle not in the communities of such men; for they will make it a part of your religion, to prosecute that end openly, which they, by arts of the tempter, have insinuated privately.

But if ever you enter into the seats of those doctors that speak reproachfully of their superiors, or detract from government, or love to curse the king in their heart, or slander him with their mouths, or disgrace their person, bless yourself and retire quickly; for there dwells the plague, but the Spirit of God is not president of the assembly. And, therefore, you shall observe in all the characters which the blessed Apostles of our Lord made for describing and avoiding societies of heretics, false guides, and bringers in of strange doctrines,—still they reckon treason and rebellion. So St. Paul: 'In the last days perilous times shall come; then men shall have the form of godliness, and deny the power of it; they shall be traitors, heady, high-minded;'* that is the characteristic note. So St. Peter: 'The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: but chiefly them that walk after the flesh

* 2 Tim. iii. 1, &c.

in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government; presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.'* The same also is recorded and observed by St. Jude: 'Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.'† These three testimonies are but the declaration of one great contingency; they are the same prophecy, declared by three apostolical men that had the gift of prophecy; and by this character the Holy Ghost in all ages hath given us caution to avoid such assemblies, where the speaking and ruling man shall be the canker of government, and a preacher of sedition, who shall either ungird the prince's sword, or unloose the button of their mantle.

9. But the Apostles in all these prophecies have remarked lust to be the inseparable companion of these rebel prophets: 'They are filthy dreamers, they defile the flesh,' so St. Jude; 'They walk after the flesh, in the lust of uncleanness,' so St. Peter; 'They are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, incontinent and sensual,' so St. Paul. And by this part of the character, as the Apostles remarked the Nicolaitans, the Gnostics, the Carpocratians, and all their impure branches, which began in their days, and multiplied after their deaths; so they prophetically did fore-signify all such sects to be avoided, who, to catch silly women laden with sins, preach doctrines of ease and licentiousness, apt to countenance and encourage vile things, and not apt to restrain a passion, or mortify a sin:—such as these: that God sees no sin in his children; that no sin will take us from God's favor; that all of such a party are elect people; that God requires of us nothing but faith; and that faith which justifies is nothing but a mere believing that we are God's chosen; that we are not tied to the law of commandments; that the law of grace is a law of liberty, and that liberty is to do what we list; that divorces are to be granted on many and slight causes; that simple fornication is no sin. These are such doctrines, that on the belief of them men may do any thing, and will do that which shall satisfy their own desires, and promote their interests, and seduce their she-disciples.

* 2 Pet. ii. 9, 10. † Jude, 5, 8.

And, indeed, it was not without great reason that these three Apostles joined lust and treason together; because the former is so shameful a crime, and renders a man's spirit naturally averse to government, that if it falls on the person of a ruler, it takes from him the spirit of government, and renders him diffident, pusillanimous, private, and ashamed: if it happen in the person of a subject, it makes him hate the man that shall shame him and punish him; it hates the light and the sun, because that opens him, and, therefore, is much more against government, because that publishes and punishes too. One thing I desire to be observed, that though the primitive heresies now named, and all those others, their successors, practised and taught horrid impurities, yet they did not invade government at all; and, therefore, those sects that these Apostles did signify by prophecy, and in whom both these are concentered,—were to appear in some later times, and the days of the prophecy were not then to be fulfilled. What they are since, every age must judge by its own experience, and for its own interest. But Christian religion is so pure and holy, that chastity is sometimes used for the whole religion; and to do an action chastely signifies purity of intention, abstraction from the world, and separation from low and secular ends, the virginity of the soul, and its union with God;* and all deviations and estrangements from God, and adhesion to forbidden objects, is called fornication and adultery. Those sects, therefore, that teach, encourage, or practise impious or unhallowed mixtures, and shameful lusts, are issues of the impure spirit, and most contrary to God, who can behold no unclean thing.

10. Those prophets and pastors,—that pretend severity and live loosely, or are severe in small things, and give liberty in greater, or forbid some sins with extreme rigor, and yet practise or teach those that serve their interest or constitute their sect,—are to be suspected and avoided accordingly: *Nihil est hominum inepta persuasione falsius, nec ficta severitate ineptius.* All ages of the church were extremely curious to observe, when any new teachers did arise, what kind of lives

* Eloquia Domini casta eloquia.

they lived; and if they pretended severely and to a strict life, then they knew their danger doubled; for it is certain all that teach doctrines contrary to the established religion delivered by the Apostles, all they are evil men. God will not suffer a good man to be seduced damnably, much less can he be a seducer of others: and, therefore, you shall still observe the false apostles to be furious and vehement in their reproofs, and severe in their animadversions of others: but then if you watch their private, or stay till their numbers are full, or observe their spiritual habits, you shall find them indulgent to themselves, or to return from their disguises, or so spiritually wicked, that their pride or their revenge, their envy or their detraction, their scorn or their complacency in themselves, their desire of pre-eminence and their impatience of a rival, shall place them far enough in distance from a poor carnal sinner, whom they shall load with censures and an upbraiding scorn; but themselves are like devils, the spirits of darkness, 'the spiritual wickednesses in high places.' Some sects of men are very angry against servants for recreating and easing their labors with a less prudent and unsevere refreshment: but the patrons of their sect shall oppress a wicked man and unbelieving person; they shall chastise a drunkard and entertain murmurers; they shall abide an oath, and yet shall force men to break three or four. This sect is to be avoided, because although it is good to be severe against carnal or bodily sins, yet it is not good to mingle with them who chastise a bodily sin to make way for a spiritual; or reprove a servant, that his lord may sin alone; or punish a stranger and a beggar, that will not approve their sin, but will have sins of his own. Concerning such persons, St. Paul hath told us, that 'they shall not proceed far, but their folly shall be manifest;' Ὀλίγον χρόνον δύναιτ' ἄν τις πλάσασθαι τὸν τρόπον τὸν αὐτοῦ, said Lysias: *Cito ad naturam ficta reciderunt suam.* They that dissemble their sin and their manners, or make severity to serve looseness, and an imaginary virtue to minister to a real vice; they that abhor idols, and would commit sacrilege; chastise a drunkard and promote sedition; declaim against the vanity of great persons, and then spoil them of their goods; reform manners, and engross estates;

talk godly, and do impiously; these are teachers which the Holy Spirit of God hath, by three Apostles, bid us to beware of and decline, as we would run from the hollowness of a grave, or the despairs and sorrows of the damned.

11. The substance of all is this: that we must not choose our doctrine by our guide, but our guide by the doctrine; and if we doubt concerning the doctrine, we may judge of that by the lives and designs of the teachers: 'By their fruits you shall know them;' and by the plain words of the Scripture, by the Apostles' creed, and by the commandments, and by the certain known and established forms of government. These are the great indices, and so plain, apt, and easy, that he that is deceived is so because he will be so; he is betrayed into it by his own lust, and a voluntary chosen folly.

12. Besides these premises, there are other little candles that can help to make the judgment clearer; but they are such as do not signify alone, but in conjunction with some of the precedent characters, which are drawn by the great lines of Scripture. Such as are: 1. when the teachers of sects stir up unprofitable and useless questions: 2. when they causelessly retire from the universal customs of Christendom; 3. and cancel all the memorials of the greatest mysteries of our redemption: 4. when their confessions and catechisms and their whole religion consists ἐν γνώσει, "in speculations" and ineffective notions, in discourses of angels and spirits, in abstractions and raptures, in things they understand not, and of which they have no revelation: 5. or else if their religion spends itself in ceremonies, outward guises, and material solemnities, and imperfect forms, drawing the heart of the vine forth into leaves and irregular fruitless suckers, turning the substance into circumstances, and the love of God into gestures, and the effect of the Spirit into the impertinent offices of a burdensome ceremonial: for by these two particulars the Apostles reproved the Jews and the Gnostics, or those that from the school of Pythagoras pretended conversation with angels, and great knowlege of the secrets of the spirits, choosing tutelar angels, and assigning them offices and charges, as in the church of Rome, to this day, they do to saints. To these add,

6. that we observe whether the guides of souls avoid to suffer for their religion; for then the matter is foul, or the man not fit to lead, that dares not die in cold blood for his religion. Will the man lay his life and his soul on the proposition? If so, then you may consider him on his proper grounds; but if he refuses that, refuse his conduct sure enough: 7. you may also watch whether they do not choose their proselytes among the rich and vicious; that they may serve themselves on his wealth, and their disciple on his vice: 8. if their doctrines evidently and greatly serve the interest of wealth or honor, and are ineffective to piety: 9. if they strive to gain any one to their confession, and are negligent to gain them to good life: 10. if, by pretences, they lessen the severity of Christ's precepts, and are easy in dispensations and licentious glosses: 11. if they invent suppletories to excuse an evil man, and yet to reconcile his bad life with the hopes of heaven; you have reason to suspect the whole, and to reject these parts of error and design, which in themselves are so unhandsome always, and sometimes criminal. He that shall observe the church of Rome so implacably fierce for purgatory and the pope's supremacy, for clerical immunities and the superiority of the ecclesiastical persons to secular, for indulgences and precious and costly pardons, and then so full of devices to reconcile an evil life with heaven, requiring only contrition even at the last for the abolition of eternal guilt, and having a thousand ways to commute and take off the temporal; will see he hath reason to be jealous that interest is in these bigger than the religion, and yet that the danger of the soul is greater than that interest; and, therefore, the man is to do accordingly.

Here, indeed, is the great necessity that we should have the prudence and discretion, the ὀξυδερκὲς of serpents,

> —— magis ut cernamus acutum
> Quam aut aquila, aut serpens Epidaurius ——.*

For so serpents, as they are curious to preserve their heads from contrition or a bruise, so also to safeguard themselves

* Hor. Sat. i. 3. 26.

that they be not charmed with sweet and enticing words of false prophets, who charm not wisely but cunningly, leading aside unstable souls; against these we must stop our ears, or lend our attention, according to the foregoing measures and significations. But here also I am to insert two or three cautions.

1. We cannot expect that by these or any other signs we shall be enabled to discover concerning all men, whether they teach an error or no: neither can a man by these reprove a Lutheran or a Zuinglian, a Dominican or a Franciscan, a Russian or a Greek, a Muscovite or a Georgian; because those that are certain signs of false teachers, do signify such men who destroy an article of faith or a commandment. God was careful to secure us from death by removing the lepers from the camp, and giving certain notices of distinction, and putting a term between the living and the dead: but he was not pleased to secure every man from innocent and harmless errors, from the mistakes of men and the failings of mortality: the signs which can distinguish a living man from a dead, will not also distinguish a black man from a brown, or a pale from a white: it is enough that we decline those guides that lead us to hell, but not to think that we are enticed to death by the weaknesses of every disagreeing brother.

2. In all discerning of sects, we must be careful to distinguish the faults of men from the evils of their doctrine; for some there are that say very well and do very ill; *εἰσὶ γὰρ*

> *Δὴ ναρθηκοφόροι πολλοὶ, Βάκχοιδέ γε παῦροι,*
> Multos thyrsigeros, paucos est cernere Bacchos;

Many men of holy calling and holy religion, that are of unholy lives: *Homines ignavi opera, philosophi sententia.* But these must be separated from the institution: and the evil of the men is only to be noted, as that such persons be not taken to our single conduct and personal ministry. I will be of the man's religion if it be good, though he be not; but I will not make him my confessor, *Μισῶ συφιστὴν, ὅστις οὐδ' αὐτῷ σοφός.** If he be not wise for himself, I will not sit down at his feet,

* Eurip. Beck. tom. ii. p. 487.

lest we mingle filthiness instead of being cleansed and instructed.

3. Let us make one separation more, and then we may consider and act according to the premises. If we espy a design or an evil mark on one doctrine, let us divide it from the other that are not so spotted. For indeed the public communions of men are at this day so ordered, that they are as fond of their errors as of their truths, and sometimes most zealous for what they have least reason to be so. And if we can, by any arts of prudence, separate from an evil proposition, and communicate in all the good, then we may love colleges of religious persons, though we do not worship images; and we may obey our prelates, though we do no injury to princes; and we may be zealous against a crime, though we be not imperious over men's persons; and we may be diligent in the conduct of souls, though we be not rapacious of estates; and we may be moderate exactors of obedience to human laws, though we do not dispense with the breach of the divine; and the clergy may represent their calling necessary, though their persons be full of modesty and humility; and we may preserve our lights, and not lose our charity. For this is the meaning of the Apostle, 'Try all things, and retain that which is good:' from every sect and community of Christians take any thing that is good, that advances holy religion and the divine honor. For one hath a better government, a second a better confession, a third hath excellent spiritual arts for the conduct of souls, a fourth hath fewer errors; and by what instrument soever a holy life is advantaged, use that, though thou grindest thy spears and arrows at the forges of the Philistines; knowing thou hast no master but Christ, no religion but the Christian, no rule but the Scriptures, and the laws, and right reason: other things that are helps, are to be used accordingly.

These are the general rules of Christian prudence, which I have chosen to insist on: there are many others more particular indeed, but yet worth not only the enumerating, but observing also, and that they be reduced to practice. For the prudence of a Christian does oblige and direct respectively all the children of the institution, that we be careful to decline a danger, watchful against a temptation, always choosing that that

is safe and fitted to all circumstances; that we be wise in choosing our company, reserved and wary in our friendships, and communicative in our charity; that we be silent, and retentive of what we hear and what we think, not credulous, not inconstant; that we be deliberate in our election and vigorous in our prosecutions; that we suffer not good nature to discompose our duty, but that we separate images from substances, and the pleasing of a present company from our religion to God and our eternal interest: for sometimes that which is counselled to us by Christian prudence, is accounted folly by human prudence, and so it is ever accounted when our duty leads us into a persecution. Hither also appertain, that we never do a thing that we know we must repent of; that we do not admire too many things, nor any thing too much; that we be even in prosperity and patient in adversity, but transported with neither into the regions of despair or levity, pusillanimity or tyranny, dejection or garishness; always to look on the scar we have impressed on our flesh, and no more to handle daggers and knives; to abstain from ambitious and vexatious suits; not to contend with a mighty man; ever to listen to him, who, according to the proverb, 'hath four ears, reason, religion, wisdom, and experience;' rather to lose a benefit, than to suffer a detriment and an evil; to stop the beginnings of evil; to pardon and not to observe all the faults of friends or enemies; of evils to choose the least, and of goods to choose the greatest, if it be also safest; not to be insolent in success, but to proceed according to the probability of human causes and contingencies; ever to be thankful for benefits, and profitable to others, and useful in all that we can; to watch the seasons and circumstances of actions; to do that willingly which cannot be avoided, lest the necessity serve another's appetite, and it be lost to all our purposes: *Insignis enim est prudentiæ, ut quod non facere non possis, id ita facere ut libenter fecisse videaris;* not to pursue difficult, uncertain, and obscure things with violence and passion. These if we observe, we shall do advantage to ourselves and to the religion; and avoid those evils which fools and unwary people suffer for nothing, dying or bleeding without cause and without pity. I end this with the saying of Socrates: Χαριεσό-

μενα δὲ φρονήσεως, καὶ ἀλλαττόμενα ἀντὶ ἀλλήλων, μὴ σκιαγραφία τις ᾖ ἡ τοιαύτη ἀρετὴ, καὶ τῷ ὄντι ἀνδραποδώδης τε, καὶ οὐδὲν ὑγιὲς, οὐδ' ἀληθὲς, ἔχῃ· "Virtue is but a shadow and a servile employment, unless it be adorned and instructed with prudence;"* which gives motion and conduct, spirits and vigorousness, to religion, making it not only human and reasonable, but divine and celestial.

* Plat. Phædo, Fischer, p. 288.

SUMMARY OF SERMON XI.

MATTHEW, CHAP. X.—VERSE 16.

PART I.

OUR blessed Saviour having prefaced concerning prudence, adds to the integrity of the precept, and the conduct of our religion, that we be simple as well as prudent, innocent as well as wary; otherwise prudence may turn into craft, and simplicity may degenerate into folly: this topic dilated on.

We do not live in an age when there is so much need to bid men be wary, as to take care that they be innocent. Indeed we are too apt to be loose and ungirt, exposing ourselves to temptation, others to offence, and the cause to dishonor; and we are open to every evil but persecution, from which we are close enough, and that alone we call prudence; but in the matter of interest we are wary as serpents, tenacious as grappling-hooks, and, above all, false and hypocritical as thin ice spread over a deep pit: this enlarged on.

It is a usual and a safe way to cozen under color of friendship or religion; but that is vastly criminal. To tell a lie for the purpose of abusing a man's belief, and by it to take possession of any thing to his injury, tends to the perfect destruction of human society; is opposed to God, who is truth itself; and is a base cowardly vice. It is also the greatest injury possible to the abused person: for besides that it makes against his interest, it renders him insecure and uneasy in his confidence; it makes it necessary for him to be jealous and suspicious, namely, troublesome to himself and others. More-

over, it robs the deceiver himself of the honor of his soul, debasing his mind and understanding. But the duty must be reduced to particular heads, in order to discover the contrary vice.

1. The first office of Christian simplicity consists in our religion and manners; that they be open and honest, public and justifiable, the same at home and abroad: this is necessary; because whoever is a hypocrite in his religion, mocks God, either denying him to be the searcher of hearts, or openly defying his omniscience and justice.

It is a crafty life that men lead, carrying on designs, and living on secret purposes, invading others' rights by false propositions in theology, &c. Such persons have abused all ages of the world, and all religions; it being so easy for men to creep into opportunities of devouring the flock on pretence of defending it, and to raise their estates under color of saving men's souls.

It may sometimes concern a man to seem religious, and to show fair appearances, for God's glory, or the edification of a brother, or the reputation of a cause: yet this is only sometimes; but it always concerns us, that we be religious; and we may reasonably think, that if the colors of religion profit us so much, the substance would do so much more: this topic enlarged on. Neither doth the sincerity of our religion require that we should not conceal our sins: for he that sins, and dares to own it publicly, may become impudent; and so long as in modesty we desire our shame to be hid, we are under the protection of one of Virtue's sisters. But if any other principle draws the veil, if we conceal our vices because we would be honored for sanctity, or would not be hindered in our designs, we serve the interest of pride or ambition, covetousness or vanity: this subject enlarged on. One thing more is to be added to the simplicity of religion; and that is, that we never deny it, nor lie concerning our faith, nor tell our propositions

and articles secretly, nor instruct novices with fraud; but teach them honestly, justly, and severely, &c.

2. Christian simplicity, or the innocency of prudence, relates to laws both in their sanction and execution; that they be decreed with equity, and proportioned to the capacity and profit of the subjects; also that they be applied to practice with remissions and reasonable interpretations, agreeable to the sense of the words and the mind of the lawgiver. But laws are not to be cozened and abused by contradictory glosses and fantastic allusions; for if their majesty be once subjected to contempt and easy resolutions, they will soon suffer the shame of prostitution: this subject illustrated, and enlarged on.

3. Christian simplicity relates to promises and acts of grace or favor; and its caution is, that all promises be simple, ingenuous, agreeable to the intention of the promiser, truly and effectually expressed, and never less in the performance than in the expression: concerning which there are several cases.

1. All promises, in which a second or third person hath no interest, that is, promises of kindness or civility, are bound to pass into performance, though they may force you to some small inconvenience; yet never to a great one: this explained.

2. Promises, in matters of justice or of grace, as from a superior to an inferior, must be so singly and ingenuously expressed, intended, and performed, that no condition is to be reserved to warrant their non-performance, but impossibility, or, what is next to it, an intolerable inconvenience: in which case we may commute our promises, so we pay to the interested person a good at least equal to that which we first promised. And to this purpose it may be added, that it is not against Christian simplicity to express our promises in such words as we know the interested man will understand in a different sense, so that what we mean be not less than what he expects. Example of our Lord's promise to his disciples, that they should sit on twelve thrones, &c. God's dealing with mankind dilated on. He

promises more than we could hope for; and when he hath done that, he gives us more than he had promised.

In this part of simplicity we Christians lie under a special obligation: for our religion being ennobled by the greatest promises, our faith made confident by the veracity of our Lord, and his word made certain by miracles, prophecies, and all the testimony of God himself; if we suffer the faith of a Christian to be an instrument to deceive our brother, we dishonor the sacredness of the institution, and become strangers to the spirit of truth and the eternal word of God: this topic dilated on to the end.

PART II.

4. Christian simplicity teaches openness and ingenuousness in contracts, covenants, associations, and all other such intercourses as suppose an equality of persons regarding matter of right and justice in the stipulation. Nothing is more contrary to our religion, than that we should deal with men as if we dealt with foxes, &c.

There are some in the world who love to smile, but their purpose is only to deceive; and many are so full of hypocrisy, that their arts can only be taken off, and their intentions laid open, by the society of banquets and the festive goblets. But it is an evil condition that a man's honesty shall be owing to his wine, and that virtue must live at the charge and will of a vice. The proper bond of societies and contracts is justice, and religion, and the laws, &c.

Because a man may be deceived by deeds and open actions as well as by words, it becomes a duty that no one, by any action done on purpose to make his brother believe a lie, abuse his persuasion and interest: this explained and illustrated. But when actions are of a double signification, or when a man is not abused or defeated of his right by an uncertain sign, it is

lawful to do a thing to other purposes than is commonly understood. Flight is a sign of fear; but it is lawful to fly when a man fears not: this farther illustrated.

But as our actions must be of a sincere and determined signification in contract, so must our words. In all parts of traffic let our words be the signification of our thoughts, and our thoughts design nothing but the advantages of a permitted exchange. But the precept of simplicity, in matters of contract, hath one step of severity beyond this; for it is not lawful so much as to conceal the secret and undiscernible faults of the merchandise; but we must acknowlege them, or else affix prices diminished to such proportions and abatements as these faults should make. He that secures his own profit, and regards not the interest of another, is more greedy of a full purse than of a holy conscience.

God sent justice into the world, that all conditions, in their several proportions, should be equal; and he that receives a good should pay one: justice is a relative term, and supposes two persons obliged; and though fortunes are unequal, and men are wise and foolish, honored and despised, yet in the intercourse of justice God has ordained that there should be no difference; and therefore it was esteemed base to dismiss a servant when corn was dear, and in the danger of shipwreck to throw out an unprofitable boy, and keep a fair horse, &c. This topic dilated on.

5. Christian simplicity hath also its necessity, and binds us towards our enemies, in questions of law or war. He that is a good soldier is not always a good man. Enemies are not persons bound by contract and society, and therefore are not obliged to open hostilities and ingenuous prosecution of the war; and if it be lawful to take by violence, it is not unjust to take the same thing by craft. But this is to be so understood, that where there is an obligation, either by the law of nations or by special contracts, no man must dare to violate his faith or honor, but must

in these things act with the same ingenuousness as the world shows in the case of peaceful promises and the intercourse of relatives. This topic enlarged on and illustrated.

6. Thus we see how far the laws of ingenuousness and Christian simplicity have put fetters on our words and actions, and directed them in the paths of truth and nobleness: and the first degrees of permission in the way of simulation are in the arts of war and cases of just hostility. But here it is usually inquired, whether it be lawful to tell a lie or dissemble to save a good man's life, or to do him a great benefit? this point illustrated by cases from Scripture, as that of Abraham and Isaac, who told a lie in their danger to Abimelech, &c.; concerning which Irenæus gives a rule, That those, whose actions the Scripture hath remarked, and yet not chastised or censured, we are not, without great reason and certain rule, to condemn. But whether his rule can extend to this case is now to be inquired. 1. It is certain that children may be cozened into goodness, and sick men into health, and passengers in a storm into safety; because not only the end is fair, charitable, and just, but the means are such as do no injury to the persons who are to receive benefit, &c. 2. Sinners may not be treated with the liberty we take in the case of children and sick persons, because they must serve God by choice and election, and must not be cozened into their duty; and therefore they are to be treated with arguments proper to move their wills, &c. Sinners that offend God by choice, must have their choice corrected and their understanding instructed, or else their evil is not cured. 3. For it is here very observable, that in intercourses of this nature we are to regard a double duty—the matter of justice, and the rights of charity; namely, that good be done by lawful instruments: for it is certain that it is not lawful to abuse a man's understanding, with a purpose to gain him sixpence; it is not fit to do evil for a good end, or abuse one man to benefit another: this topic enlarged on and illustrated. 4. And now, on the grounds of this discourse, we

may determine more easily concerning the saving of a man's life by telling a lie in judgment: instance of refusal in the case of Pericles: to lie in judgment is directly against the being of government, the honor of tribunals, and the command of God: therefore by no accident can it be hallowed; and all those crafty and delusive answers recorded in Scripture were extra-judicial, &c: this topic fully enlarged on.

7. One thing more is to be added, that it is not lawful to tell a lie in jest. As Christian simplicity forbids all lying in matters of interest, &c. so does it prohibit us to lie in mirth; for *of every idle word a man shall speak, he shall give account in the day of judgment.* Nothing is easier than simplicity and ingenuousness, by which men converse, as do the angels; doing their own work, securing their proper interests, serving the public, and glorifying their Creator; but hypocrites, and liars, and dissemblers, spread darkness over the face of affairs, and are the enemies of justice, truth, peace, and all the comforts of society.

SERMON XI.

OF CHRISTIAN SIMPLICITY.

MATTHEW, CHAP. X.—VERSE 16.

And harmless as doves.

PART I.

OUR blessed Saviour having prefaced concerning prudence, adds to the integrity of the precept, and for the conduct of our religion, that we be simple as well as prudent, innocent as well as wary. Harmless and safe together do well: for without this blessed union, prudence turns into craft, and simplicity degenerates into folly. *Prudens simplicitas* is Martial's character of a good man; a wary and cautious innocence, a harmless prudence and provision; *vera simplicitate bonus.* A true simplicity is that which leaves to a man arms defensive, his castles and strong forts; but takes away his swords and spears, his anger and his malice, his peevishness and spite. But such is the misery and such is the iniquity of mankind, that craft hath invaded all the contracts and intercourses of men, and made simplicity so weak a thing, that it is grown into contempt, sometimes with, and sometimes without reason: *Et homines simplices, minime malos*, the Romans called *parum cautos, sæpe stolidos;* unwary fools and defenceless people were called simple. And when the innocence of the old simple Romans in Junius Brutus's time, in Fabricius and Camillus's, began to degenerate, and to need the Aquilian law to force men to deal honestly; quickly

the mischief increased, till the Aquilian law grew as much out of power as honesty was out of countenance; and there, as every where else, men thought they got a purchase, when they met with an honest man: and ἠλίθιον Aristotle calls χρηστὸν, and τὸν ὀργίλον καὶ τὸν μανικὸν, ἁπλοῦν· "A fool is a profitable person, and he that is simple is little better than mad:" and so it is when simplicity wants prudence. He that, because he means honestly himself, thinks every man else does so, and therefore is unwary in all or any of his intercourses, is a simple man in an evil sense: and therefore St. Gregory Nazianzen remarks Constantius with a note of folly, for suffering his easy nature to be abused by Georgius, Οἰκειοῦται τὴν βασιλέως ἁπλότητα· οὕτως γὰρ ἐγὼ καλῶ σὴν κουφότητα, αἰδούμενος τὴν εὐλάβειαν· "The prince's simplicity, so he calls it for reverence;"* but indeed it was folly, for it was zeal without knowlege. But it was a better temper which he observed in his own father, ἡ ἁπλότης καὶ τὸ τοῦ ἤθους ἄδολον, "such a simplicity which only wanted craft or deceit," but wanted no prudence or caution: and that is truly Christian simplicity, or the sincerity of an honest, and ingenuous, and a fearless person; and it is a rare band, not only of societies and contracts, but also of friendships and advantages of mankind.

We do not live in an age in which there is so much need to bid men be wary, as to take care that they be innocent. Indeed in religion we are usually too loose and ungirt, exposing ourselves to temptation, and others to offence, and our name to dishonor, and the cause itself to reproach, and we are open and ready to every evil but persecution: from that we are close enough, and that alone we call prudence; but in the matter of interest we are wary as serpents, subtle as foxes, vigilant as the birds of the night, rapacious as kites, tenacious as grappling-hooks and the weightiest anchors, and, above all, false and hypocritical as a thin crust of ice spread on the face of a deep, smooth, and dissembling pit; if you set your foot, your foot slips, or the ice breaks, and you sink into death, and are wound in a sheet of water, descending into mischief or your grave, suffering a great fall, or a sudden death, by your confi-

* Orat. 21.

dence and unsuspecting foot. There is a universal crust of hypocrisy, that covers the face of the greatest part of mankind. Their religion consists in forms and outsides, and serves reputation or a design, but does not serve God. Their promises are but fair language, and the civilities of the piazzas or exchanges, and disband and unite like the air that beat on their teeth, when they spake the delicious and hopeful words. Their oaths are snares to catch men, and make them confident; their contracts are arts and stratagems to deceive, measured by profit and possibility; and every thing is lawful that is gainful. And their friendships are trades of getting; and their kindness of watching a dying friend is but the office of a vulture, the gaping for a legacy, the spoil of the carcass. And their sicknesses are many times policies of state; sometimes a design to show the riches of our bedchamber. And their funeral tears are but the paranymphs and pious solicitors of a second bride. And every thing that is ugly must be hid, and every thing that is handsome must be seen; and that will make a fair cover for a huge deformity. And therefore it is, as they think, necessary that men should always have some pretences and forms, some faces of religion or sweetness of language, confident affirmatives or bold oaths, protracted treaties or multitude of words, affected silence or grave deportment, a good name or a good cause, a fair relation or a worthy calling, great power or a pleasant wit; any thing that can be fair or that can be useful, any thing that can do good or be thought good, we use it to abuse our brother, or promote our interest. Leporina resolved to die, being troubled for her husband's danger; and he resolved to die with her that had so great a kindness for him, as not to outlive the best of her husband's fortune. It was agreed; and she tempered the poison, and drank the face of the unwholesome goblet; but the weighty poison sunk to the bottom, and the easy man drank it all off, and died, and the woman carried him forth to funeral; and after a little illness, which she soon recovered, she entered on the inheritance, and a second marriage.

Tuta frequensque via est———

It is a usual and a safe way to cozen, on color of friendship

or religion; but that is hugely criminal: to tell a lie to abuse a man's belief, and by it to enter on any thing of his possession to his injury, is a perfect destruction of all human society, the most ignoble of all human follies, perfectly contrary to God, who is truth itself, the greatest argument of a timorous and a base, a cowardly and a private mind, not at all honest, or confident to see the sun, "a vice fit for slaves;" ἀνόητον καὶ δουλοπρεπὲς, as Dio Chrysostomus* calls it; ὁρῶν καὶ ὅτι θηρίων τὰ δειλότατα καὶ ἀγεννέστερα τὰ ἐκεῖνα ψεύδεται πάντων μάλιστα, καὶ ἐξαπατᾷ· "for the most timorous and the basest of beasts use craft," and lie in wait, and take their prey, and save their lives by deceit. And it is the greatest injury to the abused person in the world: for, besides that it abuses his interest, it also makes him for ever insecure, and uneasy in his confidence, which is the period of cares, the rest of a man's spirit; it makes it necessary for a man to be jealous and suspicious, that is, to be troublesome to himself and every man else: and above all, lying, or craftiness, and unfaithful usages, rob a man of the honor of his soul, making his understanding useless and in the condition of a fool, spoiled, and dishonored, and despised. Πᾶσα ψυχὴ ἄκουσα στερεῖται τῆς ἀληθείας, said Plato: "Every soul loses truth very unwillingly." Every man is so great a lover of truth, that if he hath it not, he loves to believe he hath, and would fain have all the world to believe as he does; either presuming that he hath truth, or else hating to be deceived, or to be esteemed a cheated and an abused person. *Non licet suffurari mentem hominis etiam Samaritani*, said R. Moses;† *sed veritatem loquere, atque age ingenue:* "If a man be a Samaritan, that is, a hated person, a person from whom you differ in matter of religion, yet steal not his mind away, but speak truth to him honestly and ingenuously." A man's soul loves to dwell in truth, it is his resting-place; and if you take him from thence, you take him into strange regions, a place of banishment and dishonor. *Qui ignotos lædit, latro appellatur; qui amicos, paulo minus quam parricida:* "He that hurts strangers is a thief; but he that hurts his friends, is little better than a parricide." That is the brand and stigma

* Dissert. 1. de Regno. † Can. Eth.

of hypocrisy and lying: it hurts our friends, *Mendacium in damnum potens;* and makes the man that owns it guilty of a crime, that is to be punished by the sorrows usually suffered in the most execrable places of the cities. But I must reduce the duty to particulars, and discover the contrary vice by the several parts of its proportion.

1. The first office of a Christian simplicity consists in our religion and manners; that they be open and honest, public and justifiable, the same at home and abroad; for, besides the ingenuity and honesty of this, there is an indispensable and infinite necessity it should be so; because whoever is a hypocrite in his religion, mocks God, presenting to him the outside, and reserving the inward for his enemy; which is either a denying God to be the searcher of our hearts, or else an open defiance of his omniscience and of his justice. To provoke God, that we may deceive men; to defy his almightiness, that we may abuse our brother; is, to destroy all that is sacred, all that is prudent; it is an open hostility to all things human and divine, a breaking from all the bands of all relations; and uses God so cheaply, as if he were to be treated or could be cozened like a weak man, and an undiscerning and easy merchant. But so is the life of many men:

> O vita fallax! abditos sensus geris,
> Animisque pulchram turpibus faciem induis.
> Pudor impudentem celat, audacem quies,
> Pietas nefandum; vera fallaces probant;
> Simulantque molles dura.*

It is a crafty life that men live, carrying on designs, and living on secret purposes. Men pretend modesty, and under that red veil are bold against superiors; saucy to their betters on pretences of religion; invaders of others' rights by false propositions in theology; pretending humility, they challenge superiority above all orders of men; and for being thought more holy, think that they have title to govern the world: they bear on their face great religion, and are impious in their relations, false to their trust, unfaithful to their friend, unkind to their

* Senec. Hippol. Schroder, p. 285.

dependents; ὀφρῦς ἐπῃρκότες, καὶ τὸ φρόνιμον ἐπιζητοῦντες ἐν τοῖς περιπάτοις, "turning up the white of their eye, and seeking for reputation in the streets:" so did some of the old hypocrites, the Gentile Pharisees; *Asperum, cultum, et intonsum caput, negligentiorem barbam, et nitidum argento odium, et cubile humi positum, et quicquid aliud ambitionem via perversa sequitur;* being the softest persons under an austere habit, the loosest livers under a contracted brow, under a pale face having the reddest and most sprightly livers. This kind of men have abused all ages of the world, and all religions; it being so easy in nature, so prepared and ready for mischiefs, that men should creep into opportunities of devouring the flock on pretence of defending them, and to raise their estates on color of saving their souls.

Introrsum turpes, speciosi pelle decora;*

men that are like painted sepulchres, entertainment for the eye, but images of death, chambers of rottenness, and repositories of dead men's bones. It may, sometimes, concern a man to seem religious; God's glory may be shown by fair appearances, or the edification of our brother, or the reputation of a cause; but this is but sometimes: but it always concerns us, that we be religious; and we may reasonably think, that, if the colors of religion so well do advantage to us, the substance and reality would do it much more. For no man can have a good by seeming religious, and another by not being so; the power of godliness never destroys any well-built fabric, that was raised on the reputation of religion and its pretences. *Nunquam est peccare utile, quia semper est turpe*, said Cicero: "It is never profitable to sin, because it is always base and dishonest." And if the face of religion could do a good turn, which the heart and substance does destroy, then religion itself were the greatest hypocrite in the world, and promises a blessing which it never can perform, but must be beholden to its enemy to verify its promises. No: we shall be sure to feel the blessings of both the worlds, if we serve in the offices of religion, devoutly and charitably, before men and before God;

* Hor. Ep. i. 16. 46.

if we ask of God things honest in the sight of men, μετὰ φωνῆς εὐχόμενοι, (as Pythagoras gave in precept) "praying to God with a free heart and a public prayer," and doing before men things that are truly pleasing to God, turning our heart outward and our face inwards, that is, conversing with men as in the presence of God; and in our private towards God, being as holy and devout as if we prayed in public, and in the corners of the streets. Pliny, praising Ariston, gave him the title of an honest and hearty religion: *Ornat hæc magnitudo animi, quæ nihil ad ostentationem, omnia ad conscientiam refert; recteque facti, non ex populi sermone, mercedem, sed ex facto petit.** And this does well state the question of a sincere religion, and an ingenuous goodness: it requires that we do nothing for ostentation, but every thing for conscience; and we may be obliged in conscience to publish our manner of lives; but then it must be, not that we may have a popular noise for a reward, but that God may be glorified by our public worshippings, and others edified by our good examples.

Neither doth the sincerity of our religion require, that we should not conceal our sins; for he that sins, and dares to own them publicly, may become impudent: and, so long as in modesty we desire our shame should be hid, and men to think better of us than we deserve, I say, for no other reason but either because we would not derive the ill examples to others, or the shame to ourselves; we are within the protection of one of Virtue's sisters, and we are not far from the gates of the kingdom of heaven; easy and apt to be invited in, and not very unworthy to enter.

But if any other principle draws the veil, if we conceal our vices because we would be honored for sanctity, or because we would not be hindered in our designs, we serve the interest of pride and ambition, covetousness or vanity. If an innocent purpose hides the ulcer, it does half heal it; but if it retires into the secrecy of sin and darkness, it turns into a plague, and infects the heart, and it dies infallibly of a double exulceration. The Macedonian boy,—that kept the coal in his flesh, and would not shake his arm, lest he should disturb the sacrifice,

* Lib. i. ep. 22. Gierig. p. 93.

or discompose the ministry before Alexander the Great,—concealed his pain to the honor of patience and religion: but the Spartan boy, who suffered the little fox to eat his bowels, rather than confess his theft, when he was in danger of discovery, paid the price of a bold hypocrisy; that is the dissimulation reprovable in matter of manners, which conceals one sin to make way for another. Οἱ καὶ μάλα σεμνοὶ καὶ σκυθρωποὶ τὰ ἔξω καὶ τὰ δημοσίᾳ φαινόμενοι, εἰ παιδὸς ὡραίου ἢ γυναικὸς λάβωνται, ὅσα ποιοῦσιν; Lucian notes it of his philosophical hypocrites, dissemblers in matter of deportment and religion; they seem severe abroad, but they enter into the vaults of harlots, and are not ashamed to see a naked skin in the midst of its ugliness and undressed circumstances. A mighty wrestler, that had won a crown at Olympia for contending prosperously, was observed to turn his head and go forward with his face on his shoulder, to behold a fair woman that was present; and he lost the glory of his strength, when he became so weak, that a woman could turn his head about, which his adversary could not. These are the follies and weaknesses of man, and dishonors to religion, when a man shall contend nobly, and do handsomely, and then be taken in a base or dishonorable action, and mingle venom with his delicious ointment.

> Quid? quod olet gravius mistum diapasmate virus,
> Atque duplex animæ longius exit odor?*

When Fescennia perfumed her breath, that she might not smell of wine, she condemned the crime of drunkenness; but grew ridiculous, when the wine broke through the cloud of a tender perfume, and the breath of a lozenge. And that, indeed, is the reward of an hypocrite; his laborious arts of concealment furnish all the world with declamation and severity against the crime, which himself condemns with his caution. But when his own sentence too is prepared against the day of his discovery,

> Notas ergo nimis fraudes deprensaque furta
> Jam tollas, et sis ebria simpliciter.†

A simple drunkard hath but one fault: but they that avoid

* Martial, i. 88. † Ibid.

discovery, that they may drink on without shame or restraint, add hypocrisy to their vicious fulness; and for all the amazements of their consequent discovery have no other recompense, but that they pleased themselves in the security of their crime, and their undeserved reputation.

> Sic, quæ nigrior est cadente moro,
> Cerussata sibi placet Lycoris:*

For so the most easy and deformed woman, whose girdle no foolish young man will unloose, because "she is blacker than the falling mulberry, may please herself under a skin of ceruse," and call herself fairer than Pharaoh's daughter, or the hinds living on the snowy mountains.

One thing more there is to be added as an instance to the simplicity of religion, and that is, that we never deny our religion, or lie concerning our faith, nor tell our propositions and articles deceitfully, nor instruct novices or catechumens with fraud; but that when we teach them, we do it honestly, justly, and severely; not always to speak all, but never to speak otherwise than it is, nor to hide a truth from them, whose souls are concerned in it that it be known. *Neque enim id est celare, quidquid reticeas; sed cum, quod tu scias, id ignorare emolumenti tui causa velis eos, quorum intersit id scire:* so Cicero† determines the case of prudence and simplicity. The discovery of pious frauds, and the disclaiming of false, but profitable and rich propositions; the quitting honors fraudulently gotten, and unjustly detained; the reducing every man to the perfect understanding of his own religion, so far as can concern his duty; the disallowing false miracles, legends, and fabulous stories, to cozen the people into awfulness, fear, and superstition; these are parts of Christian simplicity which do integrate this duty. For religion hath strengths enough of its own to support itself; it needs not a devil for its advocate; it is the breath of God; and, as it is purer than the beams of the morning, so it is stronger than a tempest, or the combination of all the winds, though united by the prince that ruleth in the air. And we find that the Nicene faith prevailed on all

* Martial, i. 75. † Offic. iii. 13. Heusinger, p. 665.

the world, though some Arian bishops went from Ariminum to Nice, and there decreed their own articles, and called it the faith read at Nice, and used all arts, and all violence, and all lying, and diligence, to discountenance it; yet it could not be; it was the truth of God; and, therefore, it was stronger than all the gates of hell, than all the powers of darkness. And he that tells a lie for his religion, or goes about by fraud and imposture to gain proselytes, either dares not trust his cause, or dares not trust God. True religion is open in its articles, honest in its prosecutions, just in its conduct, innocent when it is accused, ignorant of falsehood, sure in its truth, simple in its sayings, and (as Julius Capitolinus said of the emperor Verus) it is *morum simplicium, et quæ adumbrare nihil possit:* it covers, indeed, a multitude of sins, by curing them, and obtaining pardon for them; but it can dissemble nothing of itself, it cannot tell or do a lie: but it can become a sacrifice; a good man can quit his life, but never his integrity. That is the first duty; the sum of which is that which Aquilius said concerning fraud and craft; *bona fides*, the honesty of a man's faith and religion, is destroyed, *cum aliud simulatum, aliud actum sit*, when either we conceal what we ought to publish, or do not act what we pretend.

2. Christian simplicity, or the innocence of prudence, relates to laws both in their sanction and execution; that they be decreed with equity, and proportioned to the capacity and profit of the subjects, and that they be applied to practice with remissions and reasonable interpretations, agreeable to the sense of the words and the mind of the lawgiver. But laws are not to be cozened and abused by contradictory glosses and fantastic allusions; as knowing that if the majesty and sacredness of them be once abused, and subjected to contempt, and unreasonable and easy resolutions, their girdle is unloosed, and they suffer the shame of prostitution and contempt. When Saul made a law that he that did eat before night should die, the people persuaded him directly to rescind it in the case of Jonathan; because it was unequal and unjust, that he who had wrought their deliverance, and, in that working it, was absent from the promulgation of the law, should suffer for breaking it, in a case of violent necessity, and of which he heard nothing, on

so fair and probable a cause. And it had been well that the Persian had been so rescued, who, against the laws of his country, killed a lion to save the life of his prince. In such cases it is fit the law be rescinded and dispensed withal, as to certain particulars; so it be done ingenuously, with competent authority, in great necessity, and without partiality. But that which I intend here is, that in the rescission or dispensation of the law, the process be open and free, and such as shall preserve the law and its sacredness, as well as the person and his interest. The laws of Sparta forbade any man to be twice admiral; but when their affairs required it, they made Aræus titular, and Lysander supravisor of him, and admiral to all real and effective purposes: this wanted ingenuity, and laid a way open for them to despise the law, which was made patient of such a weak evasion. The Lacedemonian ambassador persuaded Pericles to turn the tables of the law, which were forbidden to be removed; and another ordained in a certain case that the laws should sleep twenty-four hours; a third decreed that June should be called May, because the time of an election appointed by the law was elapsed. These arts are against the ingenuity and simplicity of laws and lawgivers, and teach the people to cheat in their obedience, when their judges are so fraudulent in the administration of their laws. Every law should be made plain, open, honest, and significant; and he that makes a decree, and intricates it on purpose, or by inconsideration lays a snare or leaves one there, is either an imprudent person, and therefore unfit to govern, or else he is a tyrant and a vulture. It is too much that a man can make a law by an arbitrary power. But when he shall also leave the law, so that every of the ministers of justice and the judges shall have power to rule by a loose, by an arbitrary, by a contradictory interpretation, it is intolerable. They that rule by prudence, should, above all things, see that the patrons and advocates of innocence should be harmless, and without an evil sting.

3. Christian simplicity relates to promises and acts of grace and favor; and its caution is, that all promises be simple, ingenuous, agreeable to the intention of the promiser, truly and effectually expressed, and never going less in the performance than in the promises and words of the expression: concerning

which the cases are several. 1. First, all promises, in which a second or a third person hath no interest, that is, the promises of kindness and civilities, are tied to pass into performance *secundum æquum et bonum;* and though they may oblige to some small inconvenience, yet never to a great one: as, I will visit you to-morrow morning, because I promised you, and therefore I will come, *etiamsi non concoxero,* "although I have not slept my full sleep;" but *si febricitavero,* "if I be in a fever," or have reason to fear one, I am disobliged. For the nature of such promises bears on them no bigger burden than can be expounded by reasonable civilities, and the common expectation of kind, and the ordinary performances of just men, who do excuse and are excused respectively by all rules of reason proportionably to such small intercourses: and therefore although such conditions be not expressed in making promises, yet to perform or rescind them by such laws is not against Christian simplicity. 2. Promises in matters of justice or in matters of grace, as from a superior to an inferior, must be so singly and ingenuously expressed, intended and performed accordingly, that no condition is to be reserved or supposed in them to warrant their non-performance but impossibility, or, that which is next to it, an intolerable inconvenience; in which cases we have a natural liberty to commute our promises, but so that we pay to the interested person a good at least equal to that which we at first promised. And to this purpose it may be added, that it is not against Christian simplicity to express our promises in such words, which we know the interested man will understand to other purposes than I intend, so it be not less that I mean than that he hopes for. When our blessed Saviour told his disciples that 'they should sit on twelve thrones,' they presently thought they had his bond for a kingdom, and dreamed of wealth and honor, power and a splendid court; and Christ knew they did, but did not disentangle his promise from the enfolded and intricate sense, of which his words were naturally capable: but he performed his promise to better purposes than they hoped for; they were presidents in the conduct of souls, princes of God's people, the chief in sufferings, stood nearest to the cross, had an elder brother's portion in the kingdom of grace, were the founders of churches, and dispensers of

the mysteries of the kingdom, and ministers of the Spirit of God, and channels of mighty blessings, under-mediators in the priesthood of their Lord, and 'their names were written in heaven;' and this was infinitely better than to groan and wake under a head pressed with a golden crown and pungent cares, and to eat alone, and to walk in a crowd, and to be vexed with all the public and many of the private evils of the people: which is the sum total of an earthly kingdom.

When God promised to the obedient that they should live long in the land which he would give them, he meant it of the land of Canaan, but yet reserved to himself the liberty of taking them quickly from that land and carrying them to a better. He that promises to lend me a staff to walk withal, and instead of that gives me a horse to carry me, hath not broken his promise nor dealt deceitfully. And this is God's dealing with mankind; he promises more than we could hope for; and when he hath done that, he gives us more than he hath promised. God hath promised to give to them that fear him all that they need, food and raiment: but he adds, out of the treasures of his mercy, variety of food and changes of raiment; some to get strength, and some to refresh; something for them that are in health, and some for the sick. And though that skins of bulls, and stags, and foxes, and bears, could have drawn a veil thick enough to hide the apertures of sin and natural shame, and to defend us from heat and cold; yet when he addeth the fleeces of sheep and beavers, and the spoils of silkworms, he hath proclaimed, that although his promises are the bounds of our certain expectation, yet they are not the limits of his loving-kindness; and if he does more than he hath promised, no man can complain that he did otherwise, and did greater things than he said. Thus God does; and therefore so also must we, imitating that example, and transcribing that copy of divine truth, always remembering that 'his promises are yea and amen.' And although God often goes more, yet he never goes less; and therefore we must never go from our promises, unless we be thrust from thence by disability, or let go by leave, or called up higher by a greater intendment and increase of kindness. And therefore when Solyman had sworn to Ibrahim Bassa, that he would never kill him so long as he were alive, he quitted himself but

ill when he sent an eunuch to cut his throat when he slept, because the priest told him that sleep was death. His act was false and deceitful as his great prophet.

But in this part of simplicity we Christians have a most special obligation: for our religion being ennobled by the most and the greatest promises, and our faith made confident by the veracity of our Lord, and his word made certain by miracles and prophecies, and voices from heaven, and all the testimony of God himself; and that truth itself is bound on us by the efficacy of great endearments and so many precepts; if we shall suffer the faith of a Christian to be an instrument to deceive our brother, and that he must either be incredulous or deceived, uncharitable or deluded like a fool, we dishonor the sacredness of the institution, and become strangers to the spirit of truth and to the eternal word of God. Our blessed Lord would not have his disciples to swear at all,—no, not in public judicature, if the necessities of the world would permit him to be obeyed. If Christians will live according to the religion, the word of a Christian were a sufficient instrument to give testimony, and to make promises, to secure a faith; and on that supposition oaths were useless, and therefore forbidden, because there could be no necessity to invoke God's name in promises or affirmations if men were indeed Christians, and therefore, in that case, would be a taking it in vain; but because many are not, and they that are in name, oftentimes are in nothing else,—it became necessary that man should swear in judgment and in public courts. But consider who it was that invented and made the necessity of oaths, of bonds, of securities, of statutes, extents, judgments, and all the artifices of human diffidence and dishonesty. These things were indeed found out by men; but the necessity of these was from him that is the father of lies; from him that hath made many fair promises, but never kept any; or if he did, it was to do a bigger mischief, to cozen the more. For so does the devil: he promises rich harvests, and blasts the corn in the spring; he tells his servants they shall be rich, and fills them with beggarly qualities, makes them base and indigent, greedy and penurious; and they that serve him intirely, as witches and such miserable persons, never can be rich: if he promises health, then men grow confident and intemperate, and do such

things whereby they shall die the sooner, and die longer; they shall die eternally. He deceives men in their trust, and frustrates their hopes, and eludes their expectations; and his promises have a period set, beyond which they cannot be true; for wicked men shall enjoy a fair fortune but till their appointed time, and then it ends in perfect and most accomplished misery; and therefore, even in this performance, he deceives them most of all, promising jewels, and performing colored stones and glass gems, that he may cozen them of their glorious inheritance. All fraudulent breakers of promises dress themselves by his glass, whose best imagery is deformity and lies.

SERMON XI.

PART II.

4. CHRISTIAN simplicity teaches openness and ingenuity in contracts, and matters of buying and selling, covenants, associations, and all such intercourses, which suppose an equality of persons as to the matter of right and justice in the stipulation. Μετὰ τὴν ἀγορὰν ἀψευδεῖν, was the old Attic law; and nothing is more contrary to Christian religion, than that the intercourses of justice be direct snares, and that we should deal with men as men deal with foxes, and wolves, and vermin; do all violence; and when that cannot be, use all craft, and every thing whereby they can be made miserable.

Ἡ δόλῳ ἢ βίῃ, ἢ ἀμφαδὸν ἢ κρυφηδόν.

There are men in the world who love to smile; but that smile is more dangerous than the furrows of a contracted brow, or a storm in Adria; for their purpose is only to deceive: they easily speak what they never mean; they heap up many arguments to persuade that to others which themselves believe not; they praise that vehemently which they deride in their hearts; they

declaim against a thing which themselves covet; they beg passionately for that which they value not, and run from an object which they would fain have to follow and overtake them; they excuse a person dexterously where the man is beloved, and watch to surprise him where he is unguarded; they praise that they may sell, and disgrace that they may keep. And these hypocrisies are so interwoven and embroidered with their whole design, that some nations refuse to contract, till their arts are taken off by the society of banquets, and the good-natured kindnesses of festival chalices: for so Tacitus observes concerning the old Germans: *De adsciscendis principibus, de pace et bello, in conviviis consultant; tanquam nullo magis tempore aut ad simplices cogitationes pateat animus, aut ad magnas incalescat:* "As if then they were more simple when they were most valiant, and were least deceitful when they were least themselves."*

But it is an evil condition that a man's honesty shall be owing to his wine, and virtue must live at the charge and will of a vice. The proper band of societies and contracts is justice and necessities, religion and the laws; the measures of it are equity, and ourselves, and our own desires in the days of our need, natural or forced; but the instruments of the exchange and conveyance of the whole intercourse is words and actions, as they are expounded by custom, consent, or understanding of the interested person, in which, if simplicity be not severely preserved, it is impossible that human society can subsist, but men shall be forced to snatch at what they have bought, and take securities that men swear truly, and exact an oath that such is the meaning of the word; and no man shall think himself secure, but shall fear he is robbed, if he has not possession first; and it shall be disputed who shall trust the other, and neither of them shall have cause to be confident on bands, or oaths, or witnesses, or promises, or all the honor of men, or all the engagements of religion. *Οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἂν ἔτι πιστεῦσαι δύναιτο ὑμῖν, οὐδ' εἰ πάνυ προθυμοῖτο, ἰδὼν ἀδικούμενον τὸν μάλιστα φιλίᾳ προσήκοντα,* said Cyrus in Xenophon:† a man, though he desires it, cannot be confident of the man that pretends truth, yet tells a

* cap. 22. † l. viii. c. 7. § 23. Schn.

lie, and is deprehended to have made use of the sacred name of friendship or religion, honesty or reputation, to deceive his brother.

But because a man may be deceived by deeds and open actions as well as words, therefore it concerns their duty, that no man, by an action on purpose done to make his brother believe a lie, abuse his persuasion and his interest. When Pythius,* the Sicilian, had a mind to sell his garden to Canius, he invited him thither, and caused fishermen, as if by custom, to fish in the channel by which the garden stood, and they threw great store of fish into their arbors, and made Canius believe it was so every day; and the man grew greedy of that place of pleasure, and gave Pythius a double price, and the next day perceived himself abused. Actions of pretence and simulation are like snares laid, into which the beasts fall though you pursue them not, but walk in the inquiry for their necessary provisions: and if a man fall into a snare that you have laid, it is no excuse to say you did nót tempt him thither. To lay a snare is against the ingenuity of a good man and a Christian, and from thence he ought to be drawn; and therefore it is not fit we should place a danger, which ourselves are therefore bound to hinder, because from thence we are obliged to rescue him. *Vir bonus est, qui prodest quibus potest, nocet autem nemini:* "When we do all the good we can, and do an evil to no man, then only we are accounted good men." But this pretence of an action signifying otherwise than it looks for, is only forbidden in matter of contract, and the material interest of a second person. But when actions are of a double signification, or when a man is not abused or defeated of his right by an uncertain sign, it is lawful to do a thing to other purposes than is commonly understood. Flight is a sign of fear; but it is lawful to fly when a man fears not. Circumcision was the seal of the Jewish religion: and yet St. Paul circumcised Timothy, though he intended he should live like the Gentile Christians, and 'not as do the Jews.' But because that rite did signify more things besides that one, he only did it to represent that he was no enemy of Moses's law, but would use it when there was just

* Cicer. Off. iii. 14. Heusing.

season, which was one part of the things which the using of circumcision could signify. So our blessed Saviour pretended that he would pass forth beyond Emmaus; but if he intended not to do it, yet he did no injury to the two disciples, for whose good it was that he intended to make this offer: and neither did he prevaricate the strictness of simplicity and sincerity, because they were persons with whom he had made no contracts, to whom he had passed no obligation: and in the nature of the thing, it is proper and natural, by an offer to give an occasion to another to do a good action; and in case it succeeds not, then to do what we intended not; and so the offer was conditional. But in all cases of bargaining, although the actions of themselves may receive naturally another sense, yet I am bound to follow that signification which may not abuse my brother, or pollute my own honesty, or snatch or rifle his interest: because it can be no ingredient into the commutation, if I exchange a thing which he understands not, and is, by error, led into this mistake, and I hold forth the fire, and delude him, and amuse his eye; for by me he is made worse.

But, secondly, as our actions must be of a sincere and determined signification in contract, so must our words; in which the rule of the old Roman honesty was this: *Uterque, si ad eloquendum venerit, non plus quam semel eloquetur:* "Every one that speaks, is to speak but once;" that is, "but one thing," because commonly that is truth; truth being but one, but error and falsehood infinitely various and changeable: and we shall seldom see a man so stiffened with impiety as to speak little and seldom, and pertinaciously adhere to a single sense, and yet that at first, and all the way after, shall be a lie. Men use to go about when they tell a lie, and devise circumstances, and stand off at a distance, and cast a cloud of words, and intricate the whole affair, and cozen themselves first, and then cozen their brother, while they have minced the case of conscience into little particles, and swallowed the lie by crumbs, so that no one passage of it should rush against the conscience, nor do hurt, until it is all got into the belly, and unites in the effect; for by that time two men are abused, the merchant in his soul, and the contractor in his interest: and this is the certain effect of much talking and little honesty. But he that means ho-

nestly, must speak but once, that is, one truth,—and hath leave to vary within the degrees of just prices and fair conditions, which because they have a latitude, may be enlarged or restrained according as the merchant pleases; save only he must never prevaricate the measures of equity, and the proportions of reputation, and the public. But in all the parts of this traffic, let our words be the signification of our thoughts, and our thoughts design nothing but the advantages of a permitted exchange. In this case the severity is so great, so exact, and so without variety of case, that it is not lawful for a man to tell a truth with a collateral design to cozen and abuse; and therefore at no hand can it be permitted to lie or equivocate, to speak craftily, or to deceive by smoothness, or intricacy, or long discourses.

But this precept of simplicity in matter of contract hath one step of severity beyond this: in matter of contract it is not lawful so much as to conceal the secret and undiscernible faults of the merchandise; but we must acknowlege them, or else affix prices made diminutive and lessened to such proportions and abatements as that fault should make. *Caveat emptor* is a good caution for him that buys, and it secures the seller in public judicature, but not in court of conscience; and the old laws of the Romans were as nice in this affair as the conscience of a Christian. Titus Claudius Centumalus* was commanded by the augurs to pull down his house in the Cœlian mountain, because it hindered their observation of the flight of birds. He exposes his house to sale; Publius Calpurnius buys it, and is forced to pluck it down; but complaining to the judges, he had remedy, because Claudius did not tell him the true state of the inconvenience. He that sells a house infected with the plague, or haunted with evil spirits, sells that which is not worth such a price which it might be put at, if it were in health and peace; and therefore cannot demand it, but openly, and on publication of the evil. To which also this is to be added,—That in some great faults, and such as have danger (as in the cases now specified), no diminution of the price is sufficient to make the merchant just and sincere, unless he tells the appendant mischief;

* Cicero, Off. iii. 16. 4. Heus.

because to some persons in many cases, and to all persons in some cases, it is not at all valuable; and they would not possess it, if they might, for nothing. Marcus Gratidianus* bought a house of Sergius Orata, which himself had sold before; but because Sergius did not declare the appendant vassalage and service, he was recompensed by the judges: for although it was certain that Gratidianus knew it, because it had been his own, yet *oportuit ex bona fide denunciari*, said the law; "it concerned the ingenuity of a good man to have spoken it openly." In all cases it must be confessed in the price, or in the words: but when the evil may be personal, and more than matter of interest and money, it ought to be confessed, and then the goods prescribed, lest by my act I do my neighbor injury, and I receive profit by his damage. Certain it is, that ingenuity is the sweetest and easiest way; there is no difficulty or case of conscience in that; and it can have no objection in it, but that possibly sometimes we lose a little advantage, which, it may be, we may lawfully acquire, but still we secure a quiet conscience; and if the merchandise be not worth so much to me, then neither is it to him; if it be to him, it is also to me; and therefore I have no loss, no hurt to keep it, if it be refused. But he that secures his own profit, and regards not the interest of another, is more greedy of a full purse than of a holy conscience, and prefers gain before justice, and the wealth of his private before the necessity of public society and commerce,—being a son of earth, whose centre is itself, without relation to heaven, that moves on another's point, and produces flowers for others, and sends influence on all the world, and receives nothing in return but a cloud of perfume, or the smell of a fat sacrifice.

God sent justice into the world, that all conditions, in their several proportions, should be equal; and he that receives a good, should pay one; and he whom I serve, is obliged to feed and to defend me in the same proportions as I serve; and justice is a relative term, and supposes two persons obliged; and though fortunes are unequal, and estates are in majority and subordination, and men are wise or foolish, honored or de-

* Cicero, Off. iii. 16. 9.

spised, yet in the intercourses of justice God hath made that there is no difference. And therefore it was esteemed ignoble to dismiss a servant, when corn was dear; in dangers of shipwreck, to throw out an unprofitable boy, and keep a fair horse; or for a wise man to snatch a plank from a drowning fool; or if the master of the ship should challenge the board, on which his passenger swims for his life; or to obtrude false monies on others, which we first took for true, but at last discovered to be false; or not to discover the gold, which the merchant sold for alchymy. The reason of all these is, because the collateral advantages are not at all to be considered in matter of rights; and though I am dearest to myself, as my neighbor is to himself, yet it is necessary that I permit him to his own advantages, as I desire to be permitted to mine. Now, therefore, simplicity and ingenuity in all contracts is perfectly and exactly necessary, because its contrary destroys that equality which justice hath placed in the affairs of men, and makes all things private, and makes a man dearer to himself, and to be preferred before kings, and republics, and churches; it destroys society, and it makes multitudes of men to be but like herds of beasts, without proper instruments of exchange, and securities of possession; without faith, and without propriety; concerning all which there is no other account to be given, but that the rewards of craft are but a little money, and a great deal of dishonor, and much suspicion, and proportionable scorn; watches and guards, spies and jealousies, are his portion. But the crown of justice is a fair life, and a clear reputation, and an inheritance there where justice dwells since she left the earth, even 'in the kingdom of the Just,' who shall call us to 'judgment for every word, and render to every man according to his works.' And what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when the Lord taketh away his soul? *Tollendum est ex rebus contrahendis omne mendacium;** that is the sum of this rule. "No falsehood or deceit is to be endured in any contract."

5. Christian simplicity hath also its necessity, and passes obligation on us towards enemies, in questions of law or war.

* Cicero, Off. iii. 15. 5. Heusing.

Plutarch commends Lysander and Philopœmen for their craft and subtlety in war; but commends it not as an ornament to their manners, but that which had influence into prosperous events: just as Ammianus affirms, *Nullo discrimine virtutis ac doli, prosperos omnes laudari debere bellorum eventus:* "whatsoever in war is prosperous, men use to commend." But he that is a good soldier, is not always a good man. Callicratidas was a good man, and followed the old way of downright hostility, ἁπλοῦν καὶ γενναῖον τῶν ἡγεμόνων τρόπον. But Lysander was πανοῦργος, καὶ σοφιστὴς ἀπάταις διαποικίλλων τὰ τοῦ πολέμου, "a crafty man, full of plots, but not noble in the conduct of his arms." * I remember Euripides brings in Achilles, commending the ingenuity of his breeding, and the simplicity and nobleness of his heart:

> Ἐγὼ δ' ὑπ' ἀνδρὸς εὐσεβεστάτου τραφεὶς,
> Χείρωνος, ἔμαθον τοὺς τρόπους ἁπλοῦς ἔχειν·

"The good old man, Chiron, was my tutor, and he taught me to use simplicity and honesty in all my manners." † It was well and noble.—But yet some wise men do not condemn all soldiers, that use to get victories by deceit: St. Austin allows it to be lawful; and St. Chrysostom commends it.‡ These good men supposed that a crafty victory was better than a bloody war; and certainly so it is, if the power gotten by craft be not exercised in blood. But this business, as to the case of conscience, will quickly be determined. Enemies are no persons bound by contract and society, and therefore are not obliged to open hostilities and ingenuous prosecutions of the war; and if it be lawful to take by violence, it is not unjust to take the same thing by craft. But this is so to be understood, that, where there is an obligation, either by the law of nations or by special contracts, no man dare to violate his faith or honor, but in these things deal with an ingenuity equal to the truth of peaceful promises, and acts of favor, and endearment to our relatives. Josephus tells of the sons of Herod, that in

* In Lysand. † Iphig. in Aul. 927. Beck, vol. i. p. 520.
‡ Quæst. 10. super Joshuam, lib. i. de Sacerdotio.

their enmities with their uncle Pheroras, and Salome, they had disagreeing manners of prosecution, as they had disagreeing hearts:* some railed openly, and thought their enmity the more honest, because it was not concealed; but, by the ignorance and rude untutored malice, lay open to the close designs of the elder brood of foxes. In this, because it was a particular and private quarrel, there is no rule of conscience, but that it be wholly laid aside, and appeased with charity; for the openness of the quarrel was but the rage and indiscretion of the malice; and the close design was but the craft and advantage of the malice. But in just wars, on that side where a competent authority, and a just cause, warrants the arms, and turns the active opposition into the excuse and license of defence, there is no restraint on the actions and words of men in the matter of sincerity, but that the laws of nations be strictly pursued, and all parties, promises, and contracts, observed religiously, and by the proportion of a private and Christian ingenuity. We find it by wise and good men mentioned, with honor, that the Romans threw bread from the besieged capitol into the stations of the Gauls, that they might think them full of corn; and that Agesilaus discouraged the enemies, by causing his own men to wear crowns, in token of a naval victory gotten by Pisander, who yet was at that time destroyed by Conon; and that Flaccus said the city was taken by Æmilius; and that Joshua dissembled a flight at Ai; and the consul, Quinctius, told aloud that the left wing of the enemies was fled, and that made the right wing fly; and that Valerius Lævinus bragged prudently that he had killed Pyrrhus; and that others use the ensigns of enemies' colors and garments. Concerning which sort of actions and words, Agesilaus, in Plutarch,† said *οὐ μόνον τὸ δίκαιον, ἀλλὰ καὶ δόξα πολλὴ, καὶ τὸ μεθ' ἡδονῆς κερδαίνειν ἔνεστι,* "It is just and pleasant, profitable and glorious." But to call a parley, and fall in on the men that treat; to swear a peace, and watch advantage; to entertain heralds, and then to torment them, to get from them notices of their party; these are such actions which are dishonorable and unjust, condemned by the laws of nations, and es-

* Hist. lib. xvi. c. 6.

† Rualdi, tom. i. p. 600.

sential justice, and by all the world. And the Hungarian army was destroyed by a Divine judgment, at the prayer and appeal of the Mahometan enemy, for their violating their faith and honor, and profaning the name of Christ, by using it in a solemn oath to deceive their enemies: Τὸ μὲν σπεισάμενον ἀδικεῖν, τῶν Θεῶν ἐστι καταφρονεῖν· "This is to despise God, when men first swear by him, and then violate their oaths or leagues, their treaties or promises." In other cases liberty hath been taken by all men, and it is reproved by no man, since the first simplicity of fighting and downright blows did cease, by the better instructed people of the world, which was, as is usually computed, about the end of the second Carthaginian war. Since that time, some few persons have been found so noble as to scorn to steal a victory, but had rather have the glory of a sharp sword than of a sharp wit.

But their fighting-gallantry is extrinsical to the question of lawful or unlawful.

6. Thus we see how far the laws of ingenuity and Christian simplicity have put fetters on our words and actions, and directed them in the paths of truth and nobleness; and the first degrees of permission of simulation are in the arts of war, and the cases of just hostility. But here it is usually inquired, Whether it be lawful to tell a lie or dissemble, to save a good man's life, or to do him a great benefit?—a question which St. Austin was much troubled withal, affirming it to be of the greatest difficulty; for he saw, generally, all the doctors before his time allowed it; and of all the fathers, no man is noted to have reproved it but St. Austin alone, and he also, as his manner is, with some variety: those which followed him, are to be accounted on his score. And it relies on such precedents, which are not lightly to be disallowed. For so Abraham and Isaac told a lie, in the case of their own danger, to Abimelech; so did the Israelitish midwives to Pharaoh, and Rahab concerning the spies, and David to the king of Gath, and the prophet that anointed Saul, and Elisha to Hazael, and Solomon in the sentence of the stolen child; concerning which Irenæus hath given us a rule, That those whose actions the Scripture hath remarked, and yet not chastised or censured, we are not, without great rea-

son and certain rule, to condemn. But whether his rule can extend to this case, is now to be inquired.

1. It is certain that children may be cozened into goodness, and sick men into health, and passengers in a storm into safety; and the reason of these is,—because not only the end is fair, and charitable, and just; but the means are such which do no injury to the persons, which are to receive benefit; because these are persons who are, either naturally or accidentally, ignorant and incompetent judges of affairs: and if they be also wilful, as such persons most commonly are, there is in art and nature left no way to deal with them, but with innocent, charitable, and artificial deceptions: they are not capable of reason and solid discourses, and therefore either must be exposed to all harms, like lions' whelps, when their nurse and sire are taken in a toil, or else be provided for in ways proportionable to their capacity.

2. Sinners may not be treated with the liberty we take to children and sick persons, because they must serve God with choice and election; and therefore, although a sick man may be cozened into his health, yet a man must not be cozened into his duty; which is no duty at all, or pleasing to God, unless it be voluntary and chosen; and therefore they are to be treated with arguments proper to move their wills, by the instrument of understanding specially, being persons of perfect faculties, and apt to be moved by the ways of health and of a man. It is an argument of infirmity, that in some cases it is necessary to make pretences; but those pretences are not made legitimate, unless it be by the infirmity of the interested man with whom we do comply. My infirmity cannot make it lawful to make colors and images of things; but the infirmity of him with whom I deal, may be such, that he can be defended or instructed no other way. But sinners that offend God by choice, must have their choice corrected, and their understandings instructed, or else their evil is not cured, nor their state amended.

3. For it is here very observable, that in intercourses of this nature we are to regard a double duty—the matter of justice, and the rights of charity; that is, that good be done by law-

ful instruments: for it is certain it is not lawful to abuse a man's understanding, with a purpose to gain him sixpence; it is not fit to do evil for a good end, or to abuse one man, to preserve or do advantage to another. And therefore it is not sufficient that I intend to do good to my neighbor; for I may not therefore tell a lie and abuse his credulity, because his understanding hath a right as certain as his will hath, or as his money; and his right to truth is no more to be cozened and defrauded, than his right unto his money. And therefore such artificial intercourses are nowise to be permitted, but to such persons over whose understandings we have power and authority. Plato said it was lawful for kings and governors to dissemble, because there is great necessity for them so to do; but it was crudely said, so nakedly to deliver the doctrine: for in such things, which the people cannot understand and yet ought to obey, there is a liberty to use them as we use children, who are of no other condition or capacities than children; but in all things where they can and ought to choose, because their understanding is only a servant to God, no man hath power to abuse their credulity and reason, to preserve their estates and peace. But because children, and mad people, and diseased, are such whose understandings are in minority and under tuition, they are to be governed by their proper instruments and proportions: Τὸ γὰρ ἀγαθὸν κρεῖττόν ἐστι τῆς ἀληθείας, said Proclus; "A good turn is to be preferred before a true saying." It is only true to such persons who cannot value truth, and prefer an intellectual before a material interest. It is better for children to have warm clothes than a true proposition, and therefore, in all senses, they and their like may be so treated; but other persons, who have distinct capacities, have an injury done them by being abused into advantages; and although those advantages make them recompense, yet he that is tied to make a man recompense, hath done him injury, and committed a sin, by which he was obliged to restitution: and therefore the man ought not to be cozened for his own good.

4. And now, on the grounds of this discourse, we may more easily determine concerning saving the life of a man by telling a lie in judgment. Δεῖ με συμπράττειν τοῖς φίλοις, ἀλλὰ μέχρι Θεῶν, said Pericles of Athens, when his friend desired him to

swear on his side; "I will assist my friend, so far as I may not dishonor God." And to lie in judgment is directly against the being of government, the honor of tribunals, and the commandment of God; and therefore by no accident can be hallowed; it is καθ' αὑτὸ φαῦλον καὶ ψεκτὸν, as Aristotle said of a lie, it is "a thing evil in itself;" that is, it is evil in the whole kind, ever since it came to be forbidden by God. And therefore all those instances of crafty and delusive answers which are recorded in Scripture, were extrajudicial, and had not this load on them, to be deceiving of authority in those things where they had right to command or inquire, and either were before or besides the commandment, not at all against it. And since the law of Moses forbade 'lying in judgment' only, by that law we are to judge of those actions in the Old Testament, which were committed after its publication: and because in the sermons of the prophets, and especially in the New Testament, Christ hath superadded or enlarged the law of ingenuity and hearty simplicity, we are to leave the old Scripture precedents on the ground of their own permissions, and finish our duty by the rules of our religion; which hath so restrained our words, that they must always be just, and always charitable; and there is no leave given to prevaricate, but to such persons where there can be no obligation, persons that have no right, such with whom no contract can be made, such as children, and fools, and infirm persons, whose faculties are hindered or depraved. I remember that Secundus extremely commends Arria for deluding her husband's fears concerning the death of his beloved boy. She wiped her eyes, and came in confidently, and sat by her husband's bed-side; and when she could no longer forbear to weep, her husband's sickness was excuse enough to legitimate that sorrow, or else she could retire; but so long she forbore to confess the boy's death, till Cæcinna Pætus had so far recovered, that he could go forth to see the boy, and need not fear with sorrow to return to his disease. It was, indeed, a great kindness and rare prudence, as their affairs and laws were ordered; but we have better means to cure our sick; our religion can charm the passion, and enable the spirit to entertain and master a sorrow. And when we have such rare supplies out of the storehouses of reason and religion, we have

less reason to use these arts and little devices, which are arguments of an infirmity as great as is the charity; and therefore we are to keep ourselves strictly to the foregoing measures. 'Let every man speak the truth to his neighbor, putting away lying, for we are members one of another;'* and, 'Be as harmless as doves,' saith our blessed Saviour in my text; which contain the whole duty concerning the matter of truth and sincerity. In both which places, truth and simplicity are founded on justice and charity; and, therefore, wherever a lie is in any sense against justice, and wrongs any man of a thing, his judgment and his reason, his right or his liberty, it is expressly forbidden in the Christian religion. What cases we can truly suppose to be besides these, the law forbids not; and therefore it is lawful to say that to myself which I believe not, for what innocent purpose I please, and to all those over whose understanding I have, or ought to have, right.

These cases are intricate enough; and therefore I shall return plainly to press the doctrine of simplicity, which ought to be so sacred, that a man ought to do nothing indirectly, which it is not lawful to own; to receive no advantage by the sin of another, which I should account dishonest, if the action were my own; for whatsoever disputes may be concerning the lawfulness of pretending craftily in some rare and contingent cases, yet it is on all hands condemned, that my craft should do injury to my brother. I remember, that when some greedy and indigent people forged a will of Lucius Minutius Basilius, and joined M. Crassus and Q. Hortensius in the inheritance, that their power for their own interest might secure the others' share; they, suspecting the thing to be a forgery, yet being not principals and actors in the contrivance, *alieni facinoris munusculum non repudiaverunt*, "refused not to receive a present made them by another's crime;"† but so they entered on a moiety of the estate, and the biggest share of the dishonor. We must not be crafty to another's injury, so much as by giving countenance to the wrong; for tortoises and the ostrich hatch their eggs with their looks only; and some have designs, which a dissembling face, or an acted gesture, can produce: but as a man

* Ephes. iv. 25. † Cicer. Off. iii. 18. 4. Heus.

may commit adultery with his eye, so with his eye also he may tell a lie, and steal with one finger, and do injury collaterally, and yet design it with a direct intuition, on which he looks with his face over his shoulder; and by whatsoever instrument my neighbor may be abused, by the same instrument I sin, if I do design it antecedently, or fall on it together with something else, or rejoice in it when it is done.

7. One thing more I am to add, that it is not lawful to tell a lie in jest. It was a virtue noted in Aristides and Epaminondas, that they would not lie, οὐδ' ἐν παιδιᾶς τινὶ τρόπῳ, "not in sport." And as Christian simplicity forbids all lying in matter of interest and serious rights; so there is an appendix to this precept, forbidding to lie in mirth; for 'of every idle word a man shall speak, he shall give account in the day of judgment.' And such are the 'jestings' which St. Paul reckons amongst 'things uncomely.' But among these, fables, apologues, parables, or figures of rhetoric, and any artificial instrument of instruction or innocent pleasure are not to be reckoned. But he that, without any end of charity or institution shall tell lies only to become ridiculous in himself, or mock another, hath set something on his doomsday book, which must be taken off by water or by fire, that is, by repentance or a judgment.

Nothing is easier than simplicity and ingenuity: it is open and ready without trouble and artificial cares, fit for communities, and the proper virtue of men, the necessary appendage of useful speech, without which, language were given to men as nails and teeth to lions, for nothing but to do mischief. It is a rare instrument of institution, and a certain token of courage; the companion of goodness and a noble mind; the preserver of friendship, the band of society, the security of merchants, and the blessing of trade; it prevents infinite of quarrels, and appeals to judges, and suffers none of the evils of jealousy. Men, by simplicity, converse as do the angels; they do their own work, and secure their proper interest, and serve the public, and do glory to God. But hypocrites, and liars, and dissemblers, spread darkness over the face of affairs, and make men, like the blind, to walk softly and timorously; and crafty men, like the close air, suck that which is open, and devour its portion, and destroy its liberty: and it is the guise

of devils, and the dishonor of the soul, and the canker of society, and the enemy of justice, and truth, and peace, of wealth and honor, of courage and merchandise. He is a good man with whom a blind man may safely converse; *dignus quicum in tenebris mices*,* to whom, in respect of his fair treatings, the darkness and light are both alike: but he that bears light on the face, with a dark heart, is like him that transforms himself into an angel of light, when he means to do most mischief. Remember this only; that false colors laid on the face besmear the skin and dirty it, but they neither make a beauty nor mend it.—'For without, shall be dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.'†

* Cic. Off. iii. 19. 10. † Apocal. xxii. 15.

SUMMARY OF SERMON XII.

PSALM LXXXVI.—VERSE 5.

PART I.

MAN, having destroyed that in which God delighted, the beauty of his soul, fell into an evil portion, and being seized on by the divine justice, grew miserable: state of this his sorrow dilated on. Yet in this misery God remembered his own creature, and by his mercy rescued him from the sword of his justice, the punishment of his guilt, and the disorder of his sin: the topic of God's mercy enlarged on. He that deeply considers it, and dwells awhile in the depths thereof, can hardly help talking wildly and without order in his discoursings: this illustrated.

It is proposed in the present discourse to consider, 1. that mercy, being an emanation of the divine goodness towards us, supposes us and found us miserable. But in this account of God's mercies, we must not reckon the miracles and graces of creation, or any thing of the nature of man, in the noble faculties and capacities for delight with which he endowed us, or the evil qualities and passions imparted to other animals, which he imparted not to us: these are to be considered as acts of bounty rather than mercy; these God gave to us when he made us, and before we needed mercy: but when we forfeited all his favor by our sins, then that these endowments were continued or restored to us, this became a mercy, and ought to be so reckoned: for it was a rare mercy that we were suffered to live at all, or that the anger of God punished us so gently: but

when the rack is changed into an axe, and the axe into an imprisonment, and the imprisonment into an enlargement, and the enlargement into an entertainment, and the entertainment into an adoption, these are the steps of a mighty favor and perfect redemption: this topic enlarged on. And if God be thus kind when he is angry, what is he when he feasts us with caresses of his more tender kindness?

2. But as a circle begins every where and ends no where, so does the mercy of God: after all this great progress, it began anew. Now that he had once more made us capable of mercies, God had what he desired, and what he could rejoice in; something on which he could pour forth his kindness.

3. God's mercies, or the mercies of his giving, came first on us by the mending of our nature: for the ignorance into which we fell is instructed, and better learned in spiritual notices, than Adam's morning knowlege in Paradise: our appetites are made subordinate to the Spirit, and the liberty of our will is improved, having *the liberty of the sons of God.* Christ hath done more for us in grace and advantage, than we lost by Adam: and as man lost Paradise and got heaven, so he lost the integrity of the first, and got the perfection of the second Adam: his *living soul* is changed into a *quickening spirit*, &c. But there are two great instances in which human nature is vastly advanced: 1. besides body and soul, which was the sum total of Adam's constitution, God hath superadded to us a third principle, the beginner of a better life, *the Spirit;* by which the new man is renewed in us day by day: 2. the advancement of human nature by Christ, when he carried it up with him, at his ascension, above the seats of angels: this topic fully enlarged on.

4. To this it may be added, that the divine mercy is so enlarged towards us, that we are not only fellow-ministers and servants with the angels, and, regarding our nature in Christ's

person, exalted above them, but we shall also be their judges: this explained and illustrated.

5. The next order of divine mercies to be remarked is also an improvement of our nature, or an appendage to it; for whereas our constitution, both of body and soul, is weak and subject to mutilation and imperfection, &c. God hath, in his infinite mercy, provided for every condition rare supplies of comfort and advantage against natural defects and wants. Thus he gives to blind men better memories: want of children he recompenses with freedom from care and pain: sorrow he alleviates by the sympathy which he implants in the breasts of men, &c. God sent no greater evil into the world than the necessity of our eating bread in the sweat of our brows; but even here he defeats the purposes of his wrath by the inundation of his mercy: for this labor and sweat of our brows is so far from being a curse, that without it our very bread would not be so great a blessing. And for the other part of the severe law and laborious imposition, that we must work out our spiritual interests with the labors of the spirit; though this may seem to be a device of torture, to punish man with continual vexation, yet it hath in it a large ingredient of mercy, or rather is nothing but an intire mercy in its constitution. For, if it were not for this, we had nothing of our own to present to God, nothing proportionable to the great rewards of heaven, &c.: this enlarged on.

6. As an appendage to this instance of the divine mercy, we may account, that, not only in nature, but in contingent and emergent events, God makes compensation to us for all the evils of chance and the hostilities of accident. Instance of Joseph; of the children of Israel in Egypt; the overturning of many kingdoms. In the mean time affliction serves religion, and tries the children of God. Instance of David, who would have suffered more had he suffered less: other examples cited.

They that love to talk of the mercies of the Lord, and to recount his good things, cannot but have observed that God delights to be called by appellatives which relate to miserable and afflicted persons; he is *the Father of the fatherless*, and an *avenger of the widow's cause;* &c. On this ground let us account whether mercy be not the greater ingredient in that death and deprivation, when I lose a man, and get God to be my Father, &c. And if, in our greatest misery God's mercy is so conspicuous, what can we suppose him to be in his loving-kindnesses? The sum is this: God intends every accident should minister to virtue, and every virtue is the nurse of joy, and both of them are daughters of the divine goodness, &c.

PART II.

7. God having by these means secured us from the evils of nature and contingences, as our Father; he next makes provision for us to supply all those necessities which himself hath made. For even to make them was a great circumstance of his mercy: this instanced in the case of hunger and thirst; also in the case of our other desires or wants, and the large abundance of things created for their gratification. God uses us as Joseph did his brother Benjamin: we have many changes of raiment, and our mess is five times bigger than the provision made for our brothers of the creation. But the mercies of God are to be estimated also according as provision is dispensed to every single person; for, not to speak of his bounties to the rich, God hath also made provision for the poorest persons; so that if they can but rule their desires, they shall have their tables furnished: this topic enlarged on. It may also be observed, that there are vast provisions made for our health in the secret storehouses of nature; and these are so many miracles of Providence, that they give plain demonstration of what relation we bear to heaven: this topic farther

enlarged on: and it is shown that God plants remedies there, where the diseases are most popular; and that every country is best provided against its own evils.

8. But because such is the bounty of God, that he hath provided a better life for the inheritance of man; if he be so merciful in making provision for our less noble part, what rare arts may we expect from his mercy in securing to us our eternal portion! Here it may be considered, that it is an infinite mercy of the Father of mercies, that he hath appointed to us such a religion as leads us to a vast felicity through pleasant ways: this topic enlarged on. It is concluded that we cannot be happy without being pious; and that the Christian religion is the greatest security and most certain instrument of making a man rich, and pleasing, and healthful, and wise, and beloved: this remarked in two or three instances.

1. The whole religion of a Christian as it relates to others, is nothing but justice and mercy, certain parents of peace and benefit; and on such a supposition, what evil can come to a just and merciful, a necessary and useful person? this explained.

2. And because there is no evil that can befall a just man, unless it comes by injury and violence, our religion hath also made as good provision against that too, as the nature of the thing will suffer: for by patience we are reconciled to the sufferance, by hope and faith we see a certain consequent reward, &c.

3. But when we consider that the Christian religion consists in doing good to all men; that it is made up of mercies and friendly conventions; and that all are to do good works for necessary uses, and not to be burthensome where it can be avoided; what more can be wished for men in relation to others, and what can be more beneficial to themselves, than that they be such as others will value for their own interest, such as princes and nobles ought to esteem, and all men can

make use of according to their several conditions; so that unless a persecution disables them, they can not only maintain themselves, but oblige others to charity?

4. To which may be added this material consideration: that all those graces, which oblige us to do good to others, are nothing else but certain instruments of bringing advantage to ourselves: this enlarged on.

5. The very charity, and love, and mercy, that is commanded in our religion, is in itself a great excellency; not only in order to heaven, but to the comforts of the earth also; and such, without which a man is not capable of blessing or comfort. And he that sent charity and friendship into the world, intended charity to be as relative as justice, and to have its effect both on the loving and the beloved person: this explained and illustrated.

The above account being so great, we need not reckon the collateral issues and little streams of comfort, which God hath made to issue from that religion to which he hath obliged us; such as are mutual comforts—visiting the sick—instructing the ignorant—converting souls, &c.—Christian graces, which God hath made necessary, and obliged us to possess them under pain of damnation; that is, he hath made it so sure to us to become happy even in this world, that if we will not be so, he threatens to destroy us: this topic enlarged on. But other mercies must now be considered.

9. God, that he might secure our duty, with our present and consequent felicity, hath tied us with golden chains, and bound us not only with the bracelets of love and hope, but with the ruder cords of fear and reverence; even with all the innumerable parts of a restraining grace. Various methods described by which God's interposing graces check the efforts of our desires, and prevent our bad and lustful designs from taking effect. And his mercy is not less in separating men

from the occasions of sin; from the neighborhood and temptation to it: this topic enlarged on.

10. The next order of mercies is of so pure and unmingled a constitution, that it hath at first no regard to the capacities and dispositions of the receivers: and afterwards, when it hath, it relates only to such conditions as itself creates and produces in the suscipient; that is, the mercies of the divine predestination: this topic enlarged on.

11. Lastly; all the mercies of God are centred in that which is the whole felicity of man; and God is so great a lover of souls, that he provides securities and fair conditions for them, even against all our reason and hopes, our expectations and weak discoursings: this instanced in a few particulars. Conclusion.

PART III.

There are other orders of mercies; but as the number is without measure, we can reckon only a few more, and them without order.

1. Good men have observed, that the providence of God is so great a provider for holy living, and does so certainly minister to religion, that nature and chance, the order of the world, and the influences of heaven, are taught to serve the ends of God and the spirit of man: this considered in the case of the Jews. But when the Christian religion had taken root and filled all lands, then the whole nature of things, the creation, became subservient to the kingdom of grace; and the head of the religion is also the head of the creatures, and ministers all the things of the world in order to the Spirit of grace: this topic enlarged on.

2. But that which is next, and not much unlike the design of this wonderful mercy, is, that all the actions of religion, though mingled with circumstances of differing, and sometimes of con-

tradictory relations, are so concentrated in God their proper centre, and conducted in such pure channels of reason and rule, that no one duty contradicts another; and it can never be necessary for any man, in any case, to sin: this explained and commented on.

1. After all this, we may sit down and reckon by great sums his gracious gifts, and tell the minutes of eternity by his mercies. God hath given us his laws to rule us, his word to instruct us, his Spirit to guide us, his angels to protect us, his ministers to exhort us: he hath revealed all our duty, affrighted our follies with the fear of death, exercised our faith, and confirmed our hopes, &c.: a large catalogue of his mercies farther enumerated: yet this is but one half. The mercies of giving only have been told: but those of forgiveness are greater, though not more. *He is ready to forgive;* and on this stock thrives the interest of our great hope, the hope of a blessed immortality. The state from which God desires to deliver us described: the easy conditions which he requires from us. In all the parts of our duty, it may be, there is but one instance in which we are to do great violence to our natural and first desires: nature and evil of a besetting sin dilated on.

2. God's readiness to pardon appears in this, that he pardons before we ask; for he that bids us ask for pardon, hath in design and purpose done the thing already.

3. Nay, God is so ready in his mercy, that he did pardon us even before he redeemed us. For what is the secret of the mystery that the eternal Son of God should suffer for us? He that did this is God: and when he did this that he might pardon us, was he at that instant angry with us? was this an effect of his anger or of his love?

4. God even pardoned us before we sinned; and when he foresaw our sin, he sent his Son to die for us: our pardon was effected by Christ's death many ages ago: and for the sins of to-morrow, and of the next day, Christ is already dead; is al-

ready risen from the dead; already makes intercession and atonement: this topic enlarged on.

5. There is yet a higher degree: for God so pardoned us once, that we should need no more pardon: he pardons us *by turning every one of us away from our iniquities.*

6. Moreover, a higher degree of pardon is still left beyond this: for although we do not abjure our covenant, renounce Christ, and extinguish the Spirit, yet we resist him, and grieve him, and go off from the holiness of the covenant, and return again, and very often step aside, and need this great pardon to be perpetually renewed: and to this purpose Jesus Christ is our Advocate with the Father: this enlarged on.

7. God is so ready to forgive, that he himself works our dispositions towards it by his preventing grace, without which we should not be found to hope for a pardon, nor to work for it, nor to ask it, nor to receive it: this topic enlarged on.

These are the great degrees of God's forwardness and readiness to forgive; for the expression of which no language is sufficient, but God's own words, describing mercy in all those dimensions which can signify to us its greatness: *His mercy reacheth unto the heavens*, &c. But besides the former great lines of the mercy of forgiveness, there is another chain, which but to produce and tell its links, is to open a cabinet of jewels, where every stone is as bright as a star, &c. 1. God is long-suffering, though he be provoked every day, &c.: 2. he also forgives a sinner oftentimes, and takes a little thing for an excuse, &c.: 3. when God perceives himself forced to strike, yet then he takes off his hand, and repents him of the evil: 4. when he is forced to proceed, he yet makes an end before he has half done, and is glad of a pretence to pardon us: 5. he forgets our sin, and puts it out of his remembrance: 6. he sometimes gives pardon beyond all his revelations and his declared will, &c.: 7. God pardons the greatest sinners, and hath left them on record: instances quoted, &c.

We see the largeness of this treasure: but we can see no end: for we have not yet looked on the rare arts of conversion, nor considered that God leaves the natural habits of virtues, even after the acceptation is interrupted, &c.

The result of this consideration is, that as we fear the divine judgments, so we should adore and love his goodness; and let the golden chains of his mercy tie us to a noble prosecution of our duty, and the interests of religion: but let us never forget that mercy is like the rainbow; it shines here as long as it is not hindered; but we must not look for it after it is night.

SERMON XII.

THE MIRACLES OF THE DIVINE MERCY.

PSALM LXXXVI.—VERSE 5.

For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy to all them that call on thee.

PART I.

MAN having destroyed that which God delighted in, that is, the beauty of his soul, fell into an evil portion, and being seized on by the divine justice, grew miserable, and condemned to an incurable sorrow. Poor Adam, being banished and undone, went and lived a sad life in the mountains of India, and turned his face and his prayers towards Paradise; thither he sent his sighs, to that place he directed his devotions, there was his heart now, where his felicity sometimes had been: but he knew not how to return thither, for God was his enemy, and, by many of his attributes, opposed himself against him. God's power was armed against him; and poor man, whom a fly or a fish could kill, was assaulted and beaten with a sword of fire in the hand of a cherub. God's eye watched him, his omniscience was man's accuser, his severity was the judge, his justice the executioner. It was a mighty calamity that man was to undergo, when he that made him, armed himself against his creature, which would have died or turned to nothing, if he had but withdrawn the miracles and the almightiness of his power: if God had taken his arm from under him, man had perished. But it was, therefore, a greater evil when God laid his arm on

him, and against him, and seemed to support him, that he might be longer killing him. In the midst of these sadnesses, God remembered his own creature, and pitied it; and, by his mercy, rescued him from the hands of his power, and the sword of his justice, and the punishment of his guilt, and the disorder of his sin; and placed him in that order of good things where he ought to have stood. It was mercy that preserved the noblest of God's creatures here below; he who stood condemned and undone under all the other attributes of God, was only saved and rescued by his mercy; that it may be evident that God's mercy is above all his works, and above all ours, greater than the creation, and greater than our sins. As is his majesty, so is his mercy, that is, without measures and without rules, sitting in heaven and filling all the world, calling for a duty that he may give a blessing, making man that he may save him, punishing him that he may preserve him. And God's justice bowed down to his mercy, and all his power passed into mercy, and his omniscience converted into care and watchfulness, into providence and observation for man's avail; and Heaven gave its influence for man, and rained showers for our food and drink; and the attributes and acts of God sat at the foot of mercy, and all that mercy descended on the head of man. For so the light of the world in the morning of the creation was spread abroad like a curtain, and dwelt no where, but filled the *expansum* with a dissemination great as the unfoldings of the air's looser garment, or the wilder fringes of the fire, without knots, or order, or combination; but God gathered the beams in his hand, and united them into a globe of fire, and all the light of the world became the body of the sun; and he lent some to his weaker sister that walks in the night, and guides a traveller, and teaches him to distinguish a house from a river, or a rock from a plain field. So is the mercy of God, a vast *expansum* and a huge ocean; from eternal ages it dwelt round about the throne of God, and it filled all that infinite distance and space, that hath no measures but the will of God: until God, desiring to communicate that excellency and make it relative, created angels, that he might have persons capable of huge gifts; and man, who he knew would need forgiveness. For so the angels, our elder brothers, dwelt for ever in the

house of their Father, and never brake his commandments; but we, the younger, like prodigals, forsook our Father's house, and went into a strange country, and followed stranger courses, and spent the portion of our nature, and forfeited all our title to the family, and came to need another portion. For, ever since the fall of Adam,—who, like an unfortunate man, spent all that a wretched man could need, or a happy man could have,—our life is repentance, and forgiveness is all our portion; and though angels were objects of God's bounty, yet man only is, in proper speaking, the object of his mercy: and the mercy which dwelt in an infinite circle, became confined to a little ring, and dwelt here below; and here shall dwell below, till it hath carried all God's portion up to heaven, where it shall reign in glory on our crowned heads for ever and ever!

But for him that considers God's mercies, and dwells awhile in that depth, it is hard not to talk wildly, and without art and order of discoursings. St. Peter talked he knew not what, when he entered into a cloud with Jesus on Mount Tabor, though it passed over him like the little curtains, that ride on the north wind, and pass between the sun and us. And when we converse with a light greater than the sun, and taste a sweetness more delicious than the dew of heaven, and in our thoughts entertain the ravishments and harmony of that atonement, which reconciles God to man, and man to felicity,—it will be more easily pardoned, if we should be like persons that admire much, and say but little: and indeed we can best confess the glories of the Lord by dazzled eyes, and a stammering tongue, and a heart overcharged with the miracles of this infinity. For so those little drops that run over, though they be not much in themselves, yet they tell that the vessel was full, and could express the greatness of the shower no otherwise but by spilling, and in artificial expressions and runnings over. But because I have undertaken to tell the drops of the ocean, and to span the measures of eternity, I must do it by the great lines of revelation and experience, and tell concerning God's mercy as we do concerning God himself, that he is that great fountain of which we all drink, and the great rock of which we all eat, and on which we all dwell, and under whose shadow we all are refreshed. God's mercy is all this; and we can only draw

great lines of it, and reckon the constellations of our hemisphere, instead of telling the number of the stars; we only can reckon what we feel and what we live by: and though there be, in every one of these lines of life, enough to engage us for ever to do God service, and to give him praises; yet it is certain there are very many mercies of God on us, and towards us, and concerning us, which we neither feel, nor see, nor understand as yet; but yet we are blessed by them, and are preserved and secured, and we shall then know them, when we come to give God thanks in the festivities of an eternal sabbath. But that I may confine my discourse into order, since the subject of it cannot, I consider,

1. That mercy, being an emanation of the Divine goodness on us, supposes us and found us miserable. In this account concerning the mercies of God, I must not reckon the miracles and graces of the creation, or any thing of the nature of man, nor tell how great an endearment God passed on us that he made us men, capable of felicity, apted with rare instruments of discourse and reason, passions and desires, notices of sense, and reflections on that sense; that we have not the deformity of a crocodile, nor the motion of a worm, nor the hunger of a wolf, nor the wildness of a tiger, nor the birth of vipers, nor the life of flies, nor the death of serpents.

Our excellent bodies and useful faculties, the upright motion and the tenacious hand, the fair appetites and proportioned satisfactions, our speech and our perceptions, our acts of life, the rare invention of letters, and the use of writing and speaking at distance, the intervals of rest and labor, (either of which, if they were perpetual, would be intolerable) the needs of nature and the provisions of Providence, sleep and business, refreshments of the body and entertainments of the soul; these are to be reckoned as acts of bounty rather than mercy: God gave us these when he made us, and before we needed mercy; these were portions of our nature, or provided to supply our consequent necessities: but when we forfeited all God's favor by our sins, then that they were continued or restored to us became a mercy, and, therefore, ought to be reckoned on this new account. For it was a rare mercy that we were suffered to live at all, or that the anger of God did permit to us one

blessing, that he did punish us so gently: but when the rack is changed into an axe, and the axe into an imprisonment, and the imprisonment changed into an enlargement, and the enlargement into an entertainment in the family, and this entertainment passes on to an adoption; these are steps of a mighty favor, and perfect redemption from our sin: and the returning back our own goods is a gift, and a perfect donative, sweetened by the apprehensions of the calamity from whence every lesser punishment began to free us. And thus it was that God punished us, and visited the sin of Adam on his posterity. He threatened we should die, and so we did, but not so as we deserved: we waited for death, and stood sentenced, and are daily summoned by sicknesses and uneasiness; and every day is a new reprieve, and brings a new favor, certain as the revolution of the sun on that day; and at last, when we must die by the irreversible decree, that death is changed into a sleep, and that sleep is in the bosom of Christ, and there dwells all peace and security, and it shall pass forth into glories and felicities. We looked for a judge, and behold a Saviour! we feared an accuser, and behold an Advocate! we sat down in sorrow, and rise in joy: we leaned on rhubarb and aloes, and our aprons were made of the sharp leaves of Indian fig-trees, and so we fed, and so were clothed; but the rhubarb proved medicinal, and the rough leaf of the tree brought its fruit wrapped up in its foldings: and round about our dwellings was planted a hedge of thorns and bundles of thistles, the aconite and the briony, the nightshade and the poppy; and at the root of these grew the healing plantain, which, rising up into a tallness, by the friendly invitation of heavenly influence, turned about the tree of the cross, and cured the wounds of the thorns, and the curse of the thistles, and the malediction of man, and the wrath of God. *Si sic irascitur, quomodo convivatur?* "If God be thus kind when he is angry, what is he when he feasts us with caresses of his more tender kindness?" All that God restored to us after the forfeiture of Adam, grew to be a double kindness; for it became the expression of a bounty which knew not how to repent, a graciousness that was not to be altered, though we were; and that was it which we needed. That is the first general: all the bounties of the creation became mercies to us,

when God continued them to us, and restored them after they were forfeit.

2. But as a circle begins every where and ends no where, so do the mercies of God; after all this huge progress, now it began anew: 'God is good and gracious,' and 'God is ready to forgive.' Now, that he had once more made us capable of mercies, God had what he desired, and what he could rejoice in, something on which he might pour forth his mercies. And, by the way, this I shall observe, (for I cannot but speak without art, when I speak of that which hath no measure) God made us capable of one sort of his mercies, and we made ourselves capable of another. 'God is good and gracious,' that is, desirous to give great gifts: and of this God made us receptive, first, by giving us natural possibilities,—that is, by giving those gifts, he made us capable of more; and next, by restoring us to his favor, that he might not, by our provocations, be hindered from raining down his mercies. But God is also 'ready to forgive:' and of this kind of mercy we made ourselves capable, even by not deserving it. Our sin made way for his grace, and our infirmities called on his pity; and because we sinned we became miserable, and because we were miserable we became pitiable; and this opened the other treasure of his mercy; that because our 'sin abounds,' his 'grace may superabound.' In this method we must confine our thoughts:

1. Giving. { Thou, Lord, art good, } plenteous in mercy to all
2. Forgiving. { and ready to forgive, } them that call on thee.

3. God's mercies, or the mercies of his giving, came first on us by mending of our nature: for the ignorance we fell into, is instructed, and better learned in spiritual notices, than Adam's morning knowlege in Paradise; our appetites are made subordinate to the Spirit, and the liberty of our wills is improved, having 'the liberty of the sons of God;' and Christ hath done us more grace and advantage than we lost in Adam: and as man lost Paradise, and got heaven; so he lost the integrity of the first, and got the perfection of the second Adam: his 'living soul' is changed into 'a quickening spirit;' our discerning faculties are filled with the spirit of faith, and our passions and desires are entertained with hope, and our election is

sanctified with charity, and our first life of a temporal possession is passed into a better, a life of spiritual expectations; and, though our first parent was forbidden it, yet we live of the fruits of the tree of life. But I instance in two great things, in which human nature is greatly advanced, and passed on to greater perfections. The first is, that besides body and soul, which was the sum total of Adam's constitution, God hath superadded to us a third principle, the beginner of a better life, I mean, the Spirit: so that now man hath a spiritual and celestial nature breathed into him, and the old man, that is, the old constitution, is the least part, and in its proper operations is dead, or dying; but the new man is that which gives denomination, life, motion, and proper actions to a Christian, and that is renewed in us day by day. But secondly, human nature is so highly exalted and mended by that mercy, which God sent immediately on the fall of Adam, the promise of Christ, that when he did come, and actuate the purposes of this mission, and ascended up into heaven, he carried human nature above the seats of angels, to the place whither 'Lucifer, the son of the morning,' aspired to ascend, but in his attempt fell into hell. For (so said the prophet) the son of the morning said, 'I will ascend into heaven, and sit in the sides of the north,' that is, the throne of Jesus seated in the east, called the sides or obliquity of the north. And as the seating of his human nature in that glorious seat brought to him all adoration, and the majesty of God, and the greatest of his exaltation; so it was so great an advancement to us, that all the angels of heaven take notice of it, and feel a change in the appendage of their condition; not that they are lessened, but that we, who in nature are less than angels, have a relative dignity greater, and an equal honor of being fellow-servants. This mystery is plain in Scripture, and the real effect of it we read in both the Testaments. When Manoah, the father of Samson, saw an angel, he worshipped him;* and, in the Old Testament, it was esteemed lawful; for they were the lieutenants of God, sent with the impresses of his majesty, and took in his name the homage from us, who then were so much their inferiors. But when the man

* Judges, xiii.

Christ Jesus was exalted, and made the Lord of all the angels, then they became our fellow-servants, and might not receive worship from any of the servants of Jesus, especially from prophets and martyrs, and those that are ministers of 'the testimony of Jesus.' And, therefore, when an angel appeared to St. John, and he, according to the custom of the Jews, fell down and worshipped him, as not yet knowing, or not considering any thing to be contrary; the angel reproved him, saying, 'See thou do it not; I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God;'* or, as St. Cyprian † reads it, "worship Jesus." God and man are now only capable of worship; but no angel: God, essentially; man, in the person of Christ, and in the exaltation of our great Redeemer: but angels not so high, and, therefore, not capable of any religious worship. And this dignity of man St. Gregory explicates fully:‡ *Quid est, quod, ante Redemptoris adventum, adorantur ab hominibus* [*angeli*] *et tacent, postmodum vero adorari refugiunt?* "Why did the angels of old receive worshippings, and were silent; but, in the New Testament, decline it, and fear to accept it?" *Nisi quod naturam nostram, quam prius despexerant, postquam hanc super se assumptam aspiciunt, prostratam sibi videri pertimescunt; nec jam sub se velut infirmam contemnere ausi sunt, quam super se, viz. in Cœli Rege, venerantur:* "The reason is because they, seeing our nature, which they did so lightly value, raised up above them, they fear to see it humbled under them; neither do they any more despise the weakness, which themselves worship in the King of Heaven." The same also is the sense of the gloss of St. Ambrose, Ansbertus, Haymo, Rupertus, and others of old; and Ribera, Salmeron, and Lewis of Granada of late: which being so plainly consonant to the words of the angel, and consigned by the testimony of such men, I the rather note, that those who worship angels, and make religious addresses to them, may see what privilege themselves lose, and how they part with the honor of Christ, who in his nature relative to us is 'exalted far above

* Revel. xxii. 9. † De Bono Patientiæ.
‡ Homil. viii. in Evangel.

all thrones, and principalities, and dominions.' I need not add lustre to this: it is like the sun, the biggest body of light, and nothing can describe it so well as its own beams: and there is not in nature, or the advantages of honor, any thing greater, than that we have the issues of that mercy which makes us fellow-servants with angels, too much honored to pay them a religious worship, whose Lord is a man, and he that is their King, is our Brother.

4. To this, for the likeness of the matter, I add, that the Divine mercy hath so prosecuted us with the enlargement of his favors, that we are not only fellow-ministers and servants with the angels, and, in our nature in the person of Christ, exalted above them; but we also shall be their judges. And if this be not an honor above that of Joseph or Mordecai, an honor beyond all the measures of a man, then there are in honor no degrees, no priority or distances, or characters of fame and nobleness. Christ is the great Judge of all the world; his human nature shall then triumph over evil men and evil spirits; then shall the devils, those angels that fell from their first originals, be brought in their chains from their dark prisons, and once be allowed to see the light, that light that shall confound them; while all that follow the Lamb, and that are accounted worthy of that resurrection, shall be assessors in the judgment. 'Know ye not,' saith St. Paul, 'that ye shall judge angels?'* And Tertullian, speaking concerning devils and accursed spirits, saith, *Hi sunt angeli quos judicaturi sumus; hi sunt angeli quibus in lavacro renunciavimus;* "those angels which we renounced in baptism, those we shall judge in the day of the Lord's glory, in the great day of recompenses."† And that the honor may be yet greater, the same day of sentence that condemns the evil angels, shall also reward the good, and increase their glory: which because they derive from their Lord and ours, from their King and our elder Brother, 'the King of Glories,' whose glorious hands shall put the crown on all our heads, we, who shall be servants of that judgment, and some way or other assist in it, have a part of that honor, to be judges of all angels, and of all the world. The effect of

* 1 Cor. vi. 3. † De Cult. Fœmin.

these things ought to be this, that we do not by base actions dishonor that nature, that sits on the throne of God, that reigns over angels, that shall sit in judgment on all the world. It is a great indecency that the son of a king should bear water on his head, and dress vineyards among the slaves; or to see a wise man, and the guide of his country, drink drunk among the meanest of his servants: but when members of Christ shall be made members of a harlot, and that which rides above a rainbow, stoops to an imperious whorish woman; when the soul that is sister to the Lord of angels, shall degenerate into the foolishness or rage of a beast, being drowned with the blood of the grape, or made mad with passion, or ridiculous with weaker follies; we shall but strip ourselves of that robe of honor, with which Christ hath invested and adorned our nature; and carry that portion of humanity, which is our own, and which God hath honored in some capacities above angels,—into a portion of an eternal shame, and become less in all senses, and equally disgraced with devils. The shame and sting of this change shall be, that we turned the glories of the Divine mercy into the baseness of ingratitude, and the amazement of suffering the Divine vengeance. But I pass on.

5. The next order of Divine mercies that I shall remark, is also an improvement of our nature, or an appendage to it. For, whereas our constitution is weak, our souls apt to diminution and impedite faculties, our bodies to mutilation and imperfection, to blindness and crookedness, to stammering and sorrows, to baldness and deformity, to evil conditions and accidents of body, and to passions and sadness of spirit; God hath, in his infinite mercy, provided for every condition rare suppletories of comfort and usefulness, to make recompense, and sometimes with an overrunning proportion, for those natural defects, which were apt to make our persons otherwise contemptible, and our conditions intolerable. God gives to blind men better memories. For on this account it is that Ruffinus makes mention of Didymus of Alexandria, who, being blind, was blest with a rare attention and singular memory, and by prayer, and hearing, and meditating, and discoursing, came to be one of the most excellent divines of that whole age. And it was more remarkable in Nicasius Mechliniensis, who, being blockish at

his book, in his first childhood fell into accidental blindness, and from thence continually grew to so quick an apprehension and so tenacious a memory, that he became the wonder of his contemporaries, and was chosen rector of the college at Mechlin, and was made licentiate of theology at Louvain, and doctor of both the laws at Cologne, living and dying in great reputation for his rare parts and excellent learning. At the same rate also God deals with men in other instances: want of children he recompenses with freedom from care; and whatsoever evil happens to the body is therefore most commonly single and unaccompanied, because God accepts that evil as the punishment of the sin of the man, or the instrument of his virtue or his security, and it is reckoned as a sufficient antidote. God hath laid a severe law on all women, that 'in sorrow they shall bring forth children:' yet God hath so attempered that sorrow, that they think themselves more accursed if they want that sorrow; and they have reason to rejoice in that state, the trouble of which is alleviated by a promise, 'that they shall be saved in bearing children.' He that wants one eye, hath the force and vigorousness of both united in that which is left him: and whenever any man is afflicted with sorrow, his reason and his religion, himself and all his friends, persons that are civil and persons that are obliged, run in to comfort him; and he may, if he will observe wisely, find so many circumstances of ease and remission, so many designs of providence and studied favors, such contrivances of collateral advantage, and certain reserves of substantial and proper comfort, that in the whole sum of affairs it often happens, that a single cross is a double blessing, and that even in a temporal sense 'it is better to go to the house of mourning' than of joys and festival egressions. Is not the affliction of poverty better than the prosperity of a great and tempting fortune? Does not wisdom dwell in a mean estate and low spirit, retired thoughts, and under a sad roof? And is it not generally true, that sickness itself is appayed with religion and holy thoughts, with pious resolutions and penitential prayers, with returns to God and to sober counsels? And if this be true, that God sends sorrow to cure sin, and affliction be the handmaid to grace; it is also certain that every sad contingency in nature is doubly recom-

pensed with the advantages of religion, besides those intervening refreshments which support the spirit, and refresh its instruments. I shall need to instance but once more in this particular.

God hath sent no greater evil into the world, than that 'in the sweat of our brows we shall eat our bread;' and in the difficulty and agony, in the sorrows and contention of our souls, we shall 'work out our salvation.' But see how in the first of these God hath outdone his own anger, and defeated the purposes of his wrath, by the inundation of his mercy: for this labor and sweat of our brows is so far from being a curse, that without it, our very bread would not be so great a blessing. Is it not labor that makes the garlick and the pulse, the sycamore and the cresses, the cheese of the goats and the butter of the sheep, to be savory and pleasant as the flesh of the roebuck, or the milk of the kine, the marrow of oxen, or the thighs of birds? If it were not for labor, men neither could eat so much, nor relish so pleasantly, nor sleep so soundly, nor be so healthful nor so useful, so strong nor so patient, so noble nor so untempted. And as God hath made us beholden to labor for the purchase of many good things, so the thing itself owes to labor many degrees of its worth and value. And therefore I need not reckon, that besides these advantages, the mercies of God have found out proper and natural remedies for labor; nights to cure the sweat of the day,—sleep to ease our watchfulness,—rest to alleviate our burdens,—and days of religion to procure our rest: and things are so ordered, that labor is become a duty, and an act of many virtues, and is not so apt to turn into a sin as its contrary; and is therefore necessary, not only because we need it for making provisions for our life, but even to ease the labor of our rest; there being no greater tediousness of spirit in the world than want of employment, and an inactive life: and the lazy man is not only unprofitable, but also accursed, and he groans under the load of his time; which yet passes over the active man light as a dream, or the feathers of a bird; while the unemployed is a disease, and like a long sleepless night to himself, and a load unto his country. And therefore, although, in this particular, God hath been so merciful in this infliction, that from the sharpness of the curse a very great part of mankind

are freed, and there are myriads of people good and bad, who do not 'eat their bread in the sweat of their brows;' yet this is but an overrunning and an excess of the divine mercy; God did more for us than we did absolutely need: for he hath so disposed of the circumstances of this curse, that man's affections are so reconciled to it, that they desire it, and are delighted in it; and so the anger of God is ended in loving-kindness, and the drop of water is lost in the full chalice of the wine, and the curse is gone out into a multiplied blessing.

But then for the other part of the severe law and laborious imposition, that we must work out our spiritual interest with the labors of our spirit, seems to most men to be so intolerable, that, rather than pass under it, they quit their hopes of heaven, and pass into the portion of devils. And what can there be to alleviate this sorrow, that a man shall be perpetually solicited with an impure tempter, and shall carry a flame within him, and all the world is on fire round about him, and every thing brings fuel to the flame, and full tables are a snare, and empty tables are collateral servants to a lust, and help to blow the fire and kindle the heap of prepared temptations; and yet a man must not at all taste of the forbidden fruit, and he must not desire what he cannot choose but desire, and he must not enjoy whatsoever he does violently covet, and must never satisfy his appetite in the most violent importunities, but must therefore deny himself, because to do so is extremely troublesome? This seems to be an art of torture, and a device to punish man with the spirit of agony, and a restless vexation. But this also hath in it a great ingredient of mercy, or rather is nothing else but a heap of mercy in its intire constitution. For, if it were not for this, we had nothing of our own to present to God, nothing proportionable to the great rewards of heaven, but either all men, or no man, must go thither; for nothing can distinguish man from man, in order to beatitude, but choice and election; and nothing can ennoble the choice but love, and nothing can exercise love but difficulty, and nothing can make that difficulty but the contradiction of our appetite, and the crossing of our natural affections. And therefore, whenever any of you are tempted violently, or grow weary in your spirits with resisting the petulancy of temptation, you may be cured, if you will please but

to remember and rejoice, that now you have something of your own to give to God, something that he will be pleased to accept, something that he hath given thee that thou mayest give it him: for our money and our time, our days of feasting and our days of sorrow, our discourse and our acts of praise, our prayers and our songs, our vows and our offerings, our worshippings and protestations, and whatsoever else can be accounted in the sum of our religion, are only accepted according as they bear along with them portions of our will, and choice of love, and appendant difficulty.

Lætius est quoties magno tibi constat honestum.

So that whoever can complain that he serves God with pains and mortifications, he is troubled because there is a distinction of things such as we call virtue and vice, reward and punishment; and if we will not suffer God to distinguish the first, he will certainly confound the latter; and his portion shall be blackness without variety, and punishment shall be his reward.

6. As an appendage to this instance of divine mercy, we are to account that, not only in nature, but in contingency and emergent events of providence, God makes compensation to us for all the evils of chance and hostilities of accident, and brings good out of evil; which is that solemn triumph which mercy makes over justice, when it rides on a cloud, and crowns its darkness with a robe of glorious light. God indeed suffered Joseph to be sold a bond-slave into Egypt, but then it was that God intended to crown and reward his chastity; for by that means he brought him to a fair condition of dwelling, and there gave him a noble trial; he had a brave contention, and he was a conqueror. Then God sent him to prison; but still that was mercy; it was to make way to bring him to Pharaoh's court. And God brought famine on Canaan, and troubled all the souls of Jacob's family: and there was a plot laid for another mercy; this was to bring them to see and partake of Joseph's glory. And then God brought a great evil on their posterity, and they groaned under taskmasters; but this God changed into the miracles of his mercy, and suffered them to be afflicted that he might do ten miracles for their sakes, and proclaim to all the world how dear they were to God. And was not the greatest

good to mankind brought forth from the greatest treason that ever was committed,—the redemption of the world, from the fact of Judas? God loving to defeat the malice of man and the arts of the devil by rare emergencies and stratagems of mercy. It is a sad calamity to see a kingdom spoiled, and a church afflicted; the priests slain with the sword, and the blood of nobles mingled with cheaper sand; religion made a cause of trouble, and the best men most cruelly persecuted; government confounded, and laws ashamed; judges decreeing causes in fear and covetousness, and the ministers of holy things setting themselves against all that is sacred, and setting fire on the fields, and turning in 'little foxes' on purpose to 'destroy the vineyards.' And what shall make recompense for this heap of sorrows, whenever God shall send such swords of fire? Even the mercies of God, which then will be made public, when we shall hear such afflicted people sing, *In convertendo captivitatem Sion*, with the voice of joy and festival eucharist, 'among such as keep holy day;' and when peace shall become sweeter, and dwell the longer. And in the mean time it serves religion, and the affliction shall try the children of God, and God shall crown them, and men shall grow wiser and more holy, and leave their petty interests, and take sanctuary in holy living, and be taught temperance by their want, and patience by their suffering, and charity by their persecution, and shall better understand the duty of their relations; and, at last, the secret worm that lay at the root of the plant, shall be drawn forth and quite extinguished. For so have I known a luxuriant vine swell into irregular twigs and bold excrescences, and spend itself in leaves and little rings, and afford but trifling clusters to the wine-press, and a faint return to his heart, which longed to be refreshed with a full vintage: but when the lord of the vine had caused the dressers to cut the wilder plant, and made it bleed, it grew temperate in its vain expense of useless leaves, and knotted into fair and juicy bunches, and made accounts of that loss of blood by the return of fruit. So is an afflicted province cured of its surfeits, and punished for its sins, and bleeds for its long riot, and is left ungoverned for its disobedience, and chastised for its wantonness; and when the sword hath let forth the corrupted blood, and the fire hath purged the rest,

then it enters into the double joys of restitution, and gives God thanks for his rod, and confesses the mercies of the Lord in making the smoke to be changed into fire, and the cloud into a perfume, the sword into a staff, and his anger into mercy.

Had not David suffered more, if he had suffered less? and had he not been miserable, unless he had been afflicted? He understood it well, when he said, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted.' He that was rival to Crassus when he stood candidate to command the legions in the Parthian war, was much troubled that he missed the dignity; but he saw himself blest that he escaped the death, and the dishonor of the overthrow, by that time the sad news arrived at Rome. The gentleman at Marseilles cursed his stars, that he was absent when the ship set sail to sea, having long waited for a wind, and missed it; but he gave thanks to the Providence that blessed him with the cross, when he knew that the ship perished in the voyage, and all the men were drowned. And even those virgins and barren women in Jerusalem that longed to become glad mothers, and for want of children would not be comforted, yet, when Titus sacked the city, found the words of Jesus true, 'Blessed is the womb that never bare, and the paps that never gave suck.' And the world being governed with a rare variety, and changes of accidents and providence; that which is a misfortune in the particular, in the whole order of things becomes a blessing bigger than we hoped for, then when we were angry with God for hindering us to perish in pleasant ways, or when he was contriving to pour on thy head a mighty blessing. Do not think the judge condemns you, when he chides you; nor think to read thy own final sentence by the first half of his words. Stand still, and see how it will be in the whole event of things: let God speak his mind out; for it may be this sad beginning is but an art to bring in, or to make thee to esteem, and entertain, and understand the blessing.

They that love to talk of the mercies of the Lord, and to recount his good things, cannot but have observed that God delights to be called by such appellatives, which relate to miserable and afflicted persons: he is 'the Father of the fatherless,' and an 'Avenger of the widow's cause;' 'he standeth

at the right hand of the poor, to save his soul from unrighteous judges;' and 'he is with us in tribulation.' And on this ground let us account whether mercy be not the greater ingredient in that death and deprivation, when I lose a man, and get God to be my Father; and when my weak arm of flesh is cut from my shoulder, and God makes me to lean on him, and becomes my patron and my guide, my advocate and defender. And if, in our greatest misery, God's mercy is so conspicuous, what can we suppose him to be in the endearment of his loving-kindness? If his evil be so transparent, well may we know that on his face dwells glory, and from his eyes light and perpetual comforts run in channels larger than the returns of the sea, when it is driven and forced faster into its natural course by the violence of a tempest from the north. The sum is this: God intends every accident should minister to virtue, and every virtue is the mother and the nurse of joy, and both of them daughters of the Divine goodness; and, therefore, if our sorrows do not pass into comforts, it is beside God's intention; it is because we will not comply with the act of that mercy, which would save us by all means and all varieties, by health and by sickness, by the life and by the death of our dearest friends, by what we choose and by what we fear; that as God's providence rules over all chances of things and all designs of men, so his mercy may rule over all his providence.

SERMON XII.

PART II.

7. God having, by these means, secured us from the evils of nature and contingences, and represented himself to be our Father, which is the greatest endearment, and tie, and expression of a natural, unalterable, and essential kindness; he next makes provisions for us to supply all those necessities which

himself hath made. For even to make necessities was a great circumstance of his mercy; and all the relishes of wine, and the savoriness of meat, the sweet and the fat, the pleasure and the satisfaction, the restitution of spirits and the strengthening of the heart, are not owing to the liver of the vine or the kidneys of wheat, to the blood of the grape or the strength of the corn, but to the appetite or the necessity; and therefore it is, that he,—that sits at a full table, and does not recreate his stomach with fasting, and let his digestion rest, and place himself in the advantages of nature's intervals;—he loses the blessing of his daily bread, and leans on his table as a sick man on his bed, or the lion in the grass, which he cannot feed on: but he that wants it, and sits down when nature gives the sign, rejoices in the health of his hunger, and the taste of his meat, and the strengthening of his spirit, and gives God thanks, while his bones and his flesh rejoice in the provisions of nature and the blessing of God. Are not the imperfections of infancy and the decays of old age the evils of our nature, because respectively they want desire, and they want gust and relish, and reflections on their acts of sense? and 'when desire fails, presently the mourners go about the streets.'* But then, that those desires are so provided for by nature and art, by ordinary and extraordinary, by foresight and contingency, according to necessity and up unto convenience, until we arrive at abundance, is a chain of mercies larger than the bow in the clouds, and richer than the trees of Eden, which were permitted to feed our miserable father. Is not all the earth our orchard and our granary, our vineyard and our garden of pleasure? and the face of the sea is our traffic, and the bowels of the sea is our vivarium, a place for fish to feed us, and to serve some other collateral appendant needs; and all the face of heaven is a repository for influences and breath, fruitful showers and fair refreshments. And when God made provision for his other creatures, he gave it of one kind, and with variety no greater than the changes of day and night, one devouring the other, or sitting down with his draught of blood, or walking on his portion of grass: but man hath all the food of beasts, and all the beasts

* Eccles. xii.

themselves that are fit for food, and the food of angels, and the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth; and every part of his body hath a provision made for it; and the smoothness of the olive and the juice of the vine refresh the heart and make the face cheerful, and serve the ends of joy and the festivity of man; and are not only to cure hunger or to allay thirst, but to appease a passion, and allay a sorrow. It is an infinite variety of meat, with which God furnishes out the table of mankind. And in the covering our sin, and clothing our nakedness, God passed from fig-leaves to the skins of beasts, from aprons to long robes, from leather to wool, and from thence to the warmth of furs, and the coolness of silks; he hath dressed not only our needs, but hath fitted the several portions of the year, and made us to go dressed like our mother, leaving off the winter-sables when the florid spring appears; and as soon as the tulip fades, we put on the robe of summer, and then sheer our sheep for winter: and God uses us as Joseph did his brother Benjamin; we have many changes of raiment, and our mess is five times bigger than the provision made for our brothers of the creation. But the providence and mercies of God are to be estimated also according as these provisions are dispensed to every single person. For that I may not remark the bounties of God running over the tables of the rich, God hath also made provisions for the poorest person; so that if they can but rule their desires, they shall have their tables furnished. And this is secured and provided for by one promise and two duties, by our own labor and our brother's charity: and our faith in this affair is confirmed by all our own, and by all the experience of other men. Are not all the men and the women of the world provided for, and fed, and clothed, till they die? And was it not always so from the first morning of the creatures? And that a man is starved to death, is a violence and a rare contingency, happening almost as seldom as for a man to have but one eye; and if our being provided for be as certain as for a man to have two eyes, we have reason to adore the wisdom, and admire the mercies of our almighty Father. But these things are evident. Is it not a great thing that God hath made such strange provisions for our health—such infinite differences of plants—and hath discovered the secrets of their nature by

mere chance, or by inspiration? Either of which is the miracle of Providence, secret to us, but ordered by certain and regular decrees of Heaven. It was a huge diligence and care of the Divine mercy that discovered to man the secrets of spagyric medicines, of stones, of spirits, and the results of seven or eight decoctions, and the strange effects of accidental mixtures, which the art of man could not suspect, being bound up in the secret sanctuary of hidden causes and secret natures, and being laid open by the concourse of twenty or thirty little accidents, all which were ordered by God as certainly as are the first principles of nature, or the descent of sons from the fathers in the most noble families.

But that which I shall observe in this whole affair is, that there are, both for the provision of our tables and the relief of our sicknesses, so many miracles of Providence, that they give plain demonstration what relation we bear to Heaven: and the poor man need not be troubled that he is to expect his daily portion after the sun is up: for he hath found to this day he was not deceived; and then he may rejoice, because he sees, by an effective probation, that in heaven a decree was made, every day to send him provisions of meat and drink. And that is a mighty mercy, when the circles of heaven are bowed down to wrap us in a bosom of care and nourishment, and the wisdom of God is daily busied to serve his mercy, as his mercy serves our necessities. Does not God plant remedies there, where the diseases are most popular? and every country is best provided against its own evils. Is not the rhubarb found where the sun most corrupts the liver; and the scabious by the shore of the sea, that God might cure as soon as he wounds? and the inhabitants may see their remedy against the leprosy and the scurvy, before they feel their sickness? And then to this we may add nature's commons and open fields, the shores of rivers and the strand of the sea, the unconfined air, the wilderness that hath no hedge; and that in these every man may hunt, and fowl, and fish, respectively; and that God sends some miracles and extraordinary blessings so for the public good, that he will not endure they should be enclosed and made several. Thus he is pleased to dispense the manna of Calabria, the medicinal waters of Germany, the muscles at

Sluys at this day, and the Egyptian beans in the marshes of Albania, and the salt at Troas of old; which God, to defeat the covetousness of man, and to spread his mercy over the face of the indigent, as the sun scatters his beams over the bosom of the whole earth, did so order, that as long as every man was permitted to partake, the bosom of heaven was open; but when man gathered them into single handfuls, and made them impropriate, God gathered his hand into his bosom, and bound the heavens with ribs of brass, and the earth with decrees of iron; and the blessing reverted to him that gave it, since they might not receive it to whom it was sent. And in general, this is the excellency of this mercy, that all our needs are certainly supplied and secured by a promise which God cannot break: but he that cannot break the laws of his own promises, can break the laws of nature, that he may perform his promise, and he will do a miracle rather than forsake thee in thy needs: so that our security and the relative mercy is bound on us by all the power and the truth of God.

8. But because such is the bounty of God, that he hath provided a better life for the inheritance of man, if God is so merciful in making fair provisions for our less noble part, in order to the transition toward our country, we may expect that the mercies of God have rare arts to secure to us his designed bounty in order to our inheritance, to that which ought to be our portion for ever. And here I consider, that it is an infinite mercy of the almighty Father of mercies, that he hath appointed to us such a religion, that leads us to a huge felicity through pleasant ways. For the felicity that is designed to us, is so above our present capacities and conceptions, that while we are so ignorant as not to understand it, we are also so foolish as not to desire it with passions great enough to perform the little conditions of its purchase. God, therefore, knowing how great an interest it is, and how apt we should be to neglect it, hath found out such conditions of acquiring it, which are eases and satisfaction to our present appetites. God hath bound our salvation on us by the endearment of temporal prosperities; and because we love this world so well, God hath so ordered it, that even this world may secure the other. And of this, God in old times made open profession: for when he had se-

cretly designed to bring his people to a glorious immortality in another world, he told them nothing of that, it being a thing bigger than the capacity of their thoughts or of their theology; but told them that which would tempt them most, and endear obedience: 'If you will obey, ye shall eat the good things of the land;' ye shall possess a rich country, ye shall triumph over your enemies, ye shall have numerous families, blessed children, rich granaries, overrunning wine-presses. For God knew the cognation of most of them was so dear between their affections and the good things of this world, that if they did not obey in hope of that they did need, and fancy, and love, and see, and feel,—it was not to be expected they should quit their affections for a secret in another world, whither before they come, they must die, and lose all desire, and all capacities of enjoyment. But this design of God, which was barefaced in the days of the law, is now in the gospel interwoven secretly (but yet plain enough to be discovered by an eye of faith and reason) into every virtue; and temporal advantage is a great ingredient in the constitution of every Christian grace. For so the richest tissue dazzles the beholder's eye, when the sun reflects on the metal, the silver and the gold weaved into fantastic imagery, or a wealthy plainness; but the rich wire and shining filaments are wrought on cheaper silk, the spoil of worms and flies: so is the embroidery of our virtue. The glories of the Spirit dwell on the face and vestment, on the fringes and the borders, and there we see the beryl and the onyx, the jasper and the sardonyx, order and perfection, love, and peace, and joy, mortification of the passions and ravishment of the will, adherences to God and imitation of Christ, reception and entertainment of the Holy Ghost, and longings after heaven, humility and chastity, temperance and sobriety; these make the frame of the garment, the clothes of the soul, that it may not be found naked in the day of the Lord's visitation; but through these rich materials a thread of silk is drawn, some compliance with worms and weaker creatures, something that shall please our bowels, and make the lower man to rejoice; they are wrought on secular content and material satisfactions: and now we cannot be happy unless we be pious, and the religion of a Christian is the greatest security,

and the most certain instrument of making a man rich, and pleasing, and healthful, and wise, and beloved, in the whole world. I shall now remark only two or three instances; for the main body of this truth I have otherwhere represented.

1. The whole religion of a Christian, as it relates to others, is nothing but justice and mercy,* certain parents of peace and benefit: and on this supposition, what evil can come to a just and a merciful, to a necessary and useful person? For the first permission of evil was on the stock of injustice. He that kills may be killed, and he that does injury may be mischieved; he that invades another man's right, must venture the loss of his own; and when I put my brother to his defence, he may chance drive the evil so far from himself, that it may reach me. Laws and judges, private and public judicatures, wars and tribunals, axes and wheels, were made, not for the righteous, but for the unjust; and all that whole order of things and persons would be useless, if men did do as they would willingly suffer.

2. And because there is no evil that can befall a just man, unless it comes by injury and violence, our religion hath also made as good provisions against that too, as the nature of the thing will suffer. For by patience we are reconciled to the sufferance, and by hope and faith we see a certain consequent reward; and by praying for the persecuting man we are cured of all the evil of the mind, the envy and the fretfulness that uses to gall the troubled and resisting man: and when we turn all the passion into charity, and God turns all the suffering into reward, there remains nothing that is very formidable. So that our religion obliges us to such duties which prevent all evils that happen justly to men; and in our religion no man can suffer as a malefactor, if he follows the religion truly: and for the evils that are unavoidable and come by violence, the graces of this discipline turn them into virtues and rewards, and make them that in their event they are desirable, and in the suffering they are very tolerable.

3. But then when we consider that the religion of a Christian consists in doing good to all men; that it is made up of mercies and friendships, of friendly conventions and assemblies

* Life of Holy Jesus, part iii. disc. 14.

of saints; that all are to do good works for necessary uses, that is, to be able to be beneficial to the public, and not to be burdensome to any, where it can be avoided; what can be wished to men in relation to others, and what can be more beneficial to themselves, than that they be such whom other men will value for their interest, such whom the public does need, such whom princes and nobles ought to esteem, and all men can make use of according to their several conditions; that they are so well provided for, that, unless a persecution disables them, they can not only maintain themselves, but oblige others to their charity? This is a temporal good, which all wise men reckon as part of that felicity which recompenses all the labors of their day, and sweetens the sleep of their night, and places them in that circle of neighborhood and amity, where men are most valued and most secure.

4. To this we may add this material consideration: that all those graces, which oblige us to do good to others, are nothing else but certain instruments of doing advantage to ourselves. It is a huge nobleness of charity to give alms, not only to our brother, but for him. It is the Christian sacrifice, like that of Job, who made oblations for his sons when they feasted each other, fearing lest they had sinned against God. And if I give alms, and fast, and pray, in behalf of my prince or my patron, my friend or my children, I do a combination of holy actions, which are, of all things that I can do, the most effectual intercession for him whom I so recommend. But then observe the art of this, and what a plot is laid by the divine mercy, to secure blessing to ourselves. That I am a person fit to intercede and pray for him, must suppose me a gracious person, one whom God rather will accept: so that, before I be fit to pray and interpose for him, I must first become dear to God; and my charity can do him no good, for whose interest I gave it, but by making me first acceptable to God, that so he may the rather hear me. And when I fast, it is first an act of repentance for myself, before it can be an instrument of impetration for him. And thus I do my brother a single benefit, by doing myself a double one. And it is also so ordered, that when I pray for a person for whom God will not hear me, yet then he will hear me for myself, though I say nothing in my own behalf; and

our prayers are like Jonathan's arrows; if they fall short, yet they return my friend or my friendship to me; or if they go home, they secure him whom they pray for; and I have not only the comfort of rejoicing with him, but the honor and the reward of procuring him a joy. And certain it is that the charitable prayer for another can never want what it asks, or, instead of it, a greater blessing. The good man, that saw his poor brother troubled because he had nothing to present for an offering at the holy communion, (when all knew themselves obliged to do kindness for Christ's poor members, with which themselves were incorporated with so mysterious a union) and gave him money that he might present for the good of his soul, as other Christians did,—had not only the reward of alms, but of religion too; and that offering was well husbanded, for it did benefit to two souls. For as I sin when I make another sin; so if I help him to do a good, I am sharer in the gains of that talent; and he shall not have the less, but I shall be rewarded on his stock. And this was it which David rejoiced in: *Particeps sum omnium timentium te:* 'I am a partner, a companion, of all them that fear thee;' I share in their profits. If I do but rejoice at every grace of God which I see in my brother, I shall be rewarded for that grace. And we need not envy the excellency of another; it becomes mine as well as his; and if I do rejoice, I shall have cause to rejoice. So excellent, so full, so artificial is the mercy of God, in making, and seeking, and finding all occasions to do us good.

5. The very charity, and love, and mercy that is commanded in our religion, is in itself a great excellency, not only in order to heaven, but to the comforts of the earth too, and such, without which a man is not capable of a blessing or a comfort. And he that sent charity and friendships into the world, intended charity to be as relative as justice, and to do its effect both on the loving and the beloved person. It is a reward and a blessing to a kind father, when his children do well; and every degree of prudent love which he bears to them, is an endearment of his joy; and he that loves them not, but looks on them as burdens of necessity and loads to his fortune, loses those many rejoicings, and the pleasures of kindness which they feast withal, who love to divide their fortunes amongst them,

because they have already divided large and equal portions of their heart. I have instanced in this relation; but it is true in all the excellency of friendship: and every man rejoices twice, when he hath a partner of his joy. A friend shares my sorrow, and makes it but a moiety; but he swells my joy, and makes it double. For so two channels divide the river, and lessen it into rivulets, and make it fordable, and apt to be drunk up at the first revels of the Syrian star; but two torches do not divide, but increase the flame. And though my tears are the sooner dried up when they run on my friend's cheeks in the furrows of compassion; yet when my flame hath kindled his lamp, we unite the glories, and make them radiant, like the golden candlesticks that burn before the throne of God; because they shine by numbers, by unions, and confederations of light and joy.

And now, on this account, which is already so great, I need not reckon concerning the collateral issues and little streams of comfort, which God hath made to issue from that religion to which God hath obliged us; such as are mutual comforts,—visiting sick people,—instructing the ignorant,—and so becoming better instructed, and fortified, and comforted ourselves, by the instruments of our brother's ease and advantages;—the glories of converting souls, of rescuing a sinner from hell, of a miserable man from the grave,—the honor and nobleness of being a good man,—the noble confidence and the bravery of innocence,—the ease of patience,—the quiet of contentedness,—the rest of peacefulness,—the worthiness of forgiving others,—the greatness of spirit that is in despising riches,—and the sweetness of spirit that is in meekness and humility;—these are Christian graces in every sense; favors of God, and issues of his bounty and his mercy. But all that I shall now observe farther concerning them is this: that God hath made these necessary; he hath obliged us to have them, under pain of damnation; he hath made it so sure to us to become happy even in this world, that if we will not, he hath threatened to destroy us; which is not a desire or aptness to do us an evil, but an art to make it impossible that we should. For God hath so ordered it, that we cannot perish, unless we desire it ourselves; and unless we will do ourselves a mischief on purpose to get

hell, we are secured of heaven: and there is not in the nature of things any way that can more infallibly do the work of felicity on creatures that can choose, than to make that which they should naturally choose, be spiritually their duty: and then he will make them happy hereafter, if they will suffer him to make them happy here. But hard by stand another throng of mercies, that must be considered by us, and God must be glorified in them; for they are such as are intended to preserve to us all this felicity.

9. God, that he might secure our duty and our present and consequent felicity, hath tied us with golden chains, and bound us, not only with the bracelets of love and the deliciousness of hope, but with the ruder cords of fear and reverence; even with all the innumerable parts of a restraining grace. For it is a huge aggravation of human calamity to consider, that after a man hath been instructed in the love and advantages of his religion, and knows it to be the way of honor and felicity, and that to prevaricate his holy sanctions is certain death and disgrace to eternal ages; yet that some men shall despise their religion, others shall be very wary of its laws, and call the commandments a burden; and too many, with a perfect choice, shall delight in death, and the ways that lead thither; and they choose money infinitely, and to rule over their brother by all means, and to be revenged extremely, and to prevail by wrong, and to do all that they can, and please themselves in all that they desire, and love it fondly, and be restless in all things but where they perish. If God should not interpose by the arts of a miraculous and merciful grace, and put a bridle in the mouth of our lusts, and chastise the sea of our follies by some heaps of sand or the walls of a rock, we should perish in the deluge of sin universally; as the old world did in that storm of the divine anger, 'the flood of waters.' But thus God suffers but few adulteries in the world, in respect of what would be, if all men that desire to be adulterers, had power and opportunity. And yet some men, and very many women, are, by modesty and natural shamefacedness, chastised in their too forward appetites; or the laws of man, or public reputation, or the indecency and unhandsome circumstances of sin, check the desire, and make it that it cannot arrive at act. For so have I seen a busy

flame sitting on a sullen coal, turn its point to all the angles and portions of its neighborhood, and reach at a heap of prepared straw, which, like a bold temptation, called it to a restless motion and activity; but either it was at too big a distance, or a gentle breath from heaven diverted the sphere and the ray of the fire to the other side, and so prevented the violence of the burning; till the flame expired in a weak consumption, and died, turning into smoke, and the coolness of death, and the harmlessness of a cinder. And when a man's desires are winged with sails and a lusty wind of passion, and pass on in a smooth channel of opportunity, God oftentimes hinders the lust and the impatient desire from passing on to its port, and entering into action, by a sudden thought, by a little remembrance of a word, by a fancy, by a sudden disability, by unreasonable and unlikely fears, by the sudden intervening of company, by the very weariness of the passion, by curiosity, by want of health, by the too great violence of the desire, bursting itself with its fulness into dissolution and a remiss easiness, by a sentence of Scripture, by the reverence of a good man, or else by the proper interventions of the Spirit of grace, chastising the crime, and representing its appendant mischiefs, and its constituent disorder and irregularity; and after all this, the very anguish and trouble of being defeated in the purpose, hath rolled itself into so much uneasiness and unquiet reflexions, that the man is grown ashamed, and vexed into more sober counsels.

And the mercy of God is not less than infinite, in separating men from the occasions of their sin, from the neighborhood and temptation. For if the hyena and a dog should be thrust into the same kennel, one of them would soon find a grave, and, it may be, both of them their death. So infallible is the ruin of most men, if they be showed a temptation. Nitre and resin, naphtha and bitumen, sulphur and pitch, are their constitution; and the fire passes on them infinitely, and there is none to secure them. But God, by removing our sins far from us, 'as far as the east is from the west,' not only putting away the guilt, but setting the occasion far from us, extremely far—so far that sometimes we cannot sin, and many times not easily,—hath magnified his mercy, by giving us safety in all those measures in which we are untempted. It would be the matter of new

discourses, if I should consider concerning the variety of God's grace; his preventing and accompanying, his inviting and corroborating grace; his assisting us to will, his enabling us to do; his sending angels to watch us, to remove us from evil company, to drive us with swords of fire from forbidden instances, to carry us by unobserved opportunities into holy company, to minister occasions of holy discourses, to make it by some means or other necessary to do a holy action, to make us in love with virtue, because they have mingled that virtue with a just and a fair interest; to some men, by making religion that thing they live on; to others, the means of their reputation and the securities of their honor, and thousands of ways more, which every prudent man that watches the ways of God, cannot but have observed. But I must also observe other great conjugations of mercy; for he that is to pass through an infinite, must not dwell on every little line of life.

10. The next order of mercies is of so pure and unmingled constitution, that it hath at first no regard to the capacities and dispositions of the receivers; and afterwards, when it hath, it relates only to such conditions, which itself creates and produces in the suscipient; I mean, the mercies of the Divine predestination. For was it not an infinite mercy, that God should predestinate all mankind to salvation by Jesus Christ, even when he had no other reason to move him to do it, but because man was miserable, and needed his pity? But I shall instance only in the intermedial part of this mysterious mercy. Why should God cause us to be born of Christian parents, and not to be circumcised by the impure hands of a Turkish priest? What distinguished me from another, that my father was severe in his discipline, and careful to 'bring me up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;' and I was not exposed to the carelessness of an irreligious guardian, and taught to steal and lie, and to make sport with my infant vices and beginnings of iniquity? Who was it that discerned our persons from the lot of dying chrysoms, whose portion must be among those who never glorified God with a free obedience? What had you done of good, or towards it, that you were not condemned to that stupid ignorance, which makes the souls of most men to be little higher than beasts; and who understand nothing of reli-

gion and noble principles, of parables and wise sayings of old men? And not only in our cradles, but in our schools and our colleges, in our friendships and in our marriages, in our enmities and in all our conversation, in our virtues and in our vices, where all things in us were equal, or else we were the inferior, there is none of us but have felt the mercies of many differences. Or it may be, my brother and I were intemperate, and drunk, and quarrelsome, and he killed a man; but God did not suffer me to do so: he fell down and died with a little disorder; I was a beast, and yet was permitted to live, and not yet to die in my sins: he did amiss once, and was surprised in that disadvantage; I sin daily, and am still invited to repentance: he would fain have lived and amended; I neglect the grace, but am allowed the time. And when God sends the angel of his wrath to execute his anger on a sinful people, we are encompassed with funerals, and yet the angel hath not smitten us. What or who makes the difference? We shall then see, when, in the separations of eternity, we sitting in glory shall see some of the partners of our sins carried into despair and the portions of the left hand, and roaring in the seats of the reprobate; we shall then perceive that it is even that mercy which hath no cause but itself, no measure of its emanation but our misery, no natural limit but eternity, no beginning but God, no object but man, no reason but an essential and an unalterable goodness, no variety but our necessity and capacity, no change but new instances of its own nature, no ending or repentance but our absolute and obstinate refusal to entertain it.

11. Lastly: All the mercies of God are concentred in that which is all the felicity of man; and God is so great a lover of souls, that he provides securities and fair conditions for them, even against all our reason and hopes, our expectations and weak discoursings. The particulars I shall remark are these: 1. God's mercy prevails over the malice and ignorances, the weaknesses and follies, of men; so that in the conventions and assemblies of heretics (as the word is usually understood, for erring and mistaken people), although their doctrines are such, that, if men should live according to their proper and natural consequences, they would live impiously; yet in every one of

these there are persons so innocently and invincibly mistaken, and who mean nothing but truth, while in the simplicity of their heart they talk nothing but error, that, in the defiance and contradiction of their own doctrines, they live according to its contradictory. He that believes contrition alone, with confession to a priest, is enough to expiate ten thousand sins, is furnished with an excuse easy enough to quit himself from the troubles of a holy life; and he that hath a great many cheap ways of buying off his penances for a little money, even for the greatest sins, is taught a way not to fear the doing of an act, for which he must repent; since repentance is a duty so soon, so certainly, and so easily performed. But these are notorious doctrines of the Roman church; and yet God so loves the souls of his creatures, that many men, who trust to these doctrines in their discourses, dare not rely on them in their lives. But while they talk as if they did not need to live strictly, many of them live so strictly as if they did not believe so foolishly. He that tells that, antecedently, God hath, to all human choice, decreed men to heaven or to hell, takes away from men all care of the way, because they believe that he that infallibly decreed that end, hath unalterably appointed the means; and some men that talk thus wildly, live soberly, and are overwrought in their understanding by some secret art of God, that man may not perish in his ignorance, but be assisted in his choice, and saved by the Divine mercies. And there is no sect of men but are furnished with antidotes and little excuses to cure the venom of their doctrine; and therefore, although the adherent and constituent poison is notorious, and therefore to be declined, yet, because it is collaterally cured and overpowered by the torrent and wisdom of God's mercies, the men are to be taken into the quire, that we may all join in giving God praise for the operation of his hands.—2. I said formerly, that there are many secret and undiscerned mercies by which men live, and of which men can give no account, till they come to give God thanks at their publication; and of this sort is that mercy which God reserves for the souls of many millions of men and women, concerning whom we have no hopes, if we account concerning them by the usual proportions of revelation and Christian commandments; and yet we

are taught to hope some strange good things concerning them, by the analogy and general rules of the Divine mercy. For what shall become of ignorant Christians, people that live in wildernesses and places more desert than a primitive hermitage? people, that are baptised, and taught to go to church, it may be, once a year? people that can get no more knowlege; they know not where to have it, nor how to desire it? And yet that an eternity of pains shall be consequent to such an ignorance, is unlike the mercy of God; and yet that they should be in any disposition towards an eternity of intellectual joys, is no where set down in the leaves of revelation. And when the Jews grew rebellious, or a silly woman of the daughters of Abraham was tempted, and sinned, and punished with death, we usually talk as if that death passed on to a worse; but yet we may arrest our thoughts on the Divine mercies, and consider that it is reasonable to expect from the Divine goodness, that no greater forfeiture be taken on a law than was expressed in its sanction and publication. He that makes a law, and binds it with the penalty of stripes, we say, he intends not to afflict the disobedient with scorpions and axes: and it had been hugely necessary that God had scared the Jews from their sins by threatening the pains of hell to them that disobeyed, if he intended to inflict it; for although many men would have ventured the future, since they are not affrighted with the present and visible evil, yet some persons would have had more philosophical and spiritual apprehensions than others, and have been infallibly cured, in all their temptations, with the fear of an eternal pain; and, however, whether they had or no, yet since it cannot be understood how it consists with the Divine justice to exact a pain bigger than he threatened, greater than he gave warning of, we are sure it is a great way off from God's mercy to do so. He that usually imposes less, and is loth to inflict any, and very often forgives it all, is hugely distant from exacting an eternal punishment, when the most that he threatened, and gave notice of, was but a temporal. The effect of this consideration I would have to be this: that we may publicly worship this mercy of God, which is kept in secret, and that we be not too forward in sentencing all heathens, and prevaricating Jews, to the eternal pains of hell; but to hope that they have a portion

in the secrets of the Divine mercy, where also, unless many of us have some little portions deposited, our condition will be very uncertain, and sometimes most miserable. God knows best how intolerably accursed a thing it is to perish in the eternal flames of hell, and therefore he is not easy to inflict it; and if the joys of heaven be too great to be expected on too easy terms, certainly the pains of the damned are infinitely too big to pass lightly on persons who cannot help themselves, and who, if they were helped with clearer revelations, would have avoided them. But as in these things we must not pry into the secrets of the Divine economy, being sure, whether it be so or no, it is most just, even as it is; so we may expect to see the glories of the Divine mercy made public, in unexpected instances, at the great day of manifestation. And, indeed, our dead many times go forth from our hands very strangely and carelessly, without prayers, without sacraments, without consideration, without counsel, and without comfort; and to dress the souls of our dear people at so sad a parting, is an employment we therefore omit, not always because we are negligent, but because the work is sad, and allays the affections of the world with those melancholic circumstances; but if God did not in his mercies make secret and equivalent provisions for them, and take care of his redeemed ones, we might unhappily meet them in a sad eternity, and, without remedy, weep together, and groan for ever. But 'God hath provided better things for them, that they, without us,' that is, without our assistances, 'shall be made perfect.'

SERMON XII.

PART III.

THERE are very many more orders and conjugations of mercies; but because the numbers of them naturally tend to their own greatness, that is, to have no measure, I must reckon but

a few more, and them also without order: for that they do descend on us, we see and feel; but by what order of things or causes, is as undiscerned as the head of Nilus, or a sudden remembrance of a long-neglected and forgotten proposition.

1. But on this account it is that good men have observed, that the providence of God is so great a provider for holy living, and does so certainly minister to religion, that nature and chance, the order of the world and the influences of heaven, are taught to serve the ends of the Spirit of God and the spirit of a man. I do not speak of the miracles that God hath, in the several periods of the world, wrought for the establishing his laws, and confirming his promises, and securing our obedience; though that was, all the way, the overflowings and miracles of mercy, as well as power: but that which I consider is, that besides the extraordinary emanations of the Divine power on the first and most solemn occasions of an institution, and the first beginnings of a religion, (such as were the wonders God did in Egypt and in the wilderness, preparatory to the sanction of that law and the first covenant, and the miracles wrought by Christ and his Apostles, for the founding and the building up the religion of the gospel and the new covenant) God does also do things wonderful and miraculous, for the promoting the ordinary and less solemn actions of our piety, and to assist and accompany them in a constant and regular succession. It was a strange variety of natural efficacies, that manna should stink in twenty-four hours, if gathered on Wednesday and Thursday, and that it should last till forty-eight hours, if gathered on the even of the sabbath; and that it should last many hundreds of years, when placed in the sanctuary by the ministry of the high priest. But so it was in the Jews' religion: and manna pleased every palate, and it filled all appetites, and the same measure was a different proportion, it was much and it was little; as if nature, that it might serve religion, had been taught some measures of infinity, which is every where and no where, filling all things and circumscribed with nothing, measured by one omer, and doing the work of two; like the crowns of kings, fitting the brows of Nimrod and the most mighty warrior, and yet not too large

for the temples of an infant prince. And not only is it thus in nature, but in contingencies and acts depending on the choice of men; for God having commanded the sons of Israel to go up to Jerusalem to worship thrice every year, and to leave their borders to be guarded by women, and children, and sick persons, in the neighborhood of diligent and spiteful enemies, yet God so disposed of their hearts and opportunities, that they never entered the land when the people were at their solemnity, until they desecrated their rites, by doing at their passover the greatest sin and treason in the world. Till at Easter they crucified the Lord of life and glory, they were secure in Jerusalem and in their borders; but when they had destroyed religion by this act, God took away their security, and Titus besieged the city at the feast of Easter, that the more might perish in the deluge of the Divine indignation.

To this observation the Jews add, that in Jerusalem no man ever had a fall that came thither to worship; that at their solemn festivals, there was reception in the town for all the inhabitants of the land; concerning which, although I cannot affirm any thing, yet this is certain, that no godly person, among all the tribes of Israel, was ever a beggar, but all the variety of human chances was overruled to the purposes of providence, and providence was measured by the ends of the religion, and the religion which promised them plenty, performed the promise, till the nation and the religion too began to decline, that it might give place to a better ministry, and a more excellent dispensation of the things of the world.

But when the Christian religion was planted, and had taken root, and had filled all lands, then all the nature of things, the whole creation, became servant to the kingdom of grace; and the head of the religion is also the head of the creatures, and ministers all the things of the world in order to the Spirit of grace: and now 'angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for the good of them that fear the Lord;' and all the violences of men, and things of nature and choice, are forced into subjection and lowest ministries, and to co-operate, as with a united design, to verify all the promises of the gospel, and to secure and advantage all the children of the kingdom: and now he that is made poor by chance or persecution, is made

rich by religion; and he that hath nothing, yet possesses all things: and sorrow itself is the greatest comfort, not only because it ministers to virtue, but because itself is one, as in the case of repentance; and death ministers to life, and bondage is freedom, and loss is gain, and our enemies are our friends, and every thing turns into religion, and religion turns into felicity and all manner of advantages. But that I may not need to enumerate any more particulars in this observation, certain it is, that angels of light and darkness, all the influences of heaven and the fruits and productions of the earth, the stars and the elements, the secret things that lie in the bowels of the sea and the entrails of the earth, the single effects of all efficients and the conjunction of all causes, all events foreseen and all rare contingencies, every thing of chance and every thing of choice, is so much a servant to him whose greatest desire and great interest is, by all means, to save our souls, that we are thereby made sure, that all the whole creation shall be made to bend, in all the flexures of its nature and accidents, that it may minister to religion, to the good of the catholic church, and every person within its bosom, who are the body of him that rules over all the world, and commands them as he chooses.

2. But that which is next to this, and not much unlike the design of this wonderful mercy, is, that all the actions of religion, though mingled with circumstances of differing, and sometimes of contradictory relations, are so concentred in God their proper centre, and conducted in such certain and pure channels of reason and rule, that no one duty does contradict another; and it can never be necessary for any man, in any case, to sin. They that bound themselves by an oath to kill Paul, were not environed with the sad necessities of murder on one side, and vow-breach on the others; so that if they did murder him, they were man-slayers, if they did not, they were perjured; for God had made provision for this case, that no unlawful oath should pass an obligation. He that hath given his faith in unlawful confederation against his prince, is not girded with a fatal necessity of breach of trust on one side, or breach of allegiance on the other; for in this also God hath secured the case of conscience, by forbidding any man to make

an unlawful promise; and, on a stronger degree of the same reason, by forbidding him to keep it, in case he hath made it. He that doubts whether it be lawful to keep the Sunday holy, must not do it during that doubt, because 'whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.' But yet God's mercy hath taken care to break this snare in sunder, so that he may neither sin against the commandment, nor against his conscience; for he is bound to lay aside his error, and be better instructed; till when, the scene of his sin lies in something that hath influence on his understanding, not in the omission of the fact. 'No man can serve two masters,' but therefore 'he must hate the one, and cleave to the other.' But then if we consider what infinite contradiction there is in sin, and that the great long-suffering of God is expressed in this, that God 'suffered the contradiction of sinners,' we shall feel the mercy of God in the peace of our consciences and the unity of religion, so long as we do the work of God. It is a huge affront to a covetous man, that he is the farther off from fulness by having great heaps and vast revenues; and that his thirst increases by having that which should quench it; and that the more he shall need to be satisfied, the less he shall dare to do it; and that he shall refuse to drink because he is dry; that he dies if he tastes, and languishes if he does not; and at the same time he is full and empty, bursting with a plethory and consumed with hunger, drowned with rivers of oil and wine, and yet dry as the Arabian sands. But then the contradiction is multiplied, and the labyrinths more amazed, when prodigality waits on another curse, and covetousness heaps up, that prodigality may scatter abroad; then distractions are infinite, and a man hath two devils to serve of contradictory designs, and both of them exacting obedience more unreasonably than the Egyptian taskmasters; then there is no rest, no end of labors, no satisfaction of purposes, no method of things; but they begin where they should end, and begin again; and never pass forth to content, or reason, or quietness, or possession. But the duty of a Christian is easy in a persecution, it is clear under a tyranny, it is evident in despite of heresy, it is one in the midst of schism, it is determined amongst infinite disputes; being like a rock in the sea, which is beaten with the tide, and washed with retiring

waters, and encompassed with mists, and appears in several figures, but it always dips its foot in the same bottom, and remains the same in calms and storms, and survives the revolution of ten thousand tides, and there shall dwell till time and tides shall be no more. So is our duty, uniform and constant, open and notorious, variously represented, but in the same manner exacted; and in the interest of our souls God hath not exposed us to uncertainty, or the variety of any thing that can change; and it is by the grace and mercy of God, put into the power of every Christian, to do that which God, through Jesus Christ, will accept to salvation; and neither men nor devils shall hinder it, unless we list ourselves.

1. After all this, we may sit down and reckon by great sums and conjugations of his gracious gifts, and tell the minutes of eternity by the number of the divine mercies. God hath given his laws to rule us, his word to instruct us, his Spirit to guide us, his angels to protect us, his ministers to exhort us: he revealed all our duty, and he hath concealed whatsoever can hinder us: he hath affrighted our follies with fear of death, and engaged our watchfulness by its secret coming: he hath exercised our faith by keeping private the state of souls departed, and yet hath confirmed our faith by a promise of a resurrection, and entertained our hope by some general significations of the state of interval. His mercies make contemptible means instrumental to great purposes, and a small herb the remedy of the greatest diseases. He impedes the devil's rage, and infatuates his counsels; he diverts his malice, and defeats his purposes; he binds him in the chain of darkness, and gives him no power over the children of light; he suffers him to walk in solitary places, and yet fetters him that he cannot disturb the sleep of a child; he hath given him mighty power, and yet a young maiden that resists him, shall make him flee away; he hath given him a vast knowlege, and yet an ignorant man can confute him with the twelve articles of his creed; he gave him power over the winds, and made him prince of the air, and yet the breath of a holy prayer can drive him as far as the utmost sea; and he hath so restrained him, that, except it be by faith, we know not whether there be any devil, yea or no; for we never heard his noises, nor have seen his affrighting shapes. This is

that great principle of all the felicity we hope for, and of all the means thither, and of all the skill and all the strengths we have to use those means. He hath made great variety of conditions, and yet hath made all necessary, and all mutual helpers; and by some instruments, and in some respects, they are all equal in order to felicity, to content, and final and intermedial satisfactions. He gave us part of our reward in hand, that he might enable us to work for more; he taught the world arts for use, arts for entertainment of all our faculties and all our dispositions: he gives eternal gifts for temporal services, and gives us whatsoever we want for asking, and commands us to ask, and threatens us if we will not ask, and punishes us for refusing to be happy. This is that glorious attribute that hath made order and health, harmony and hope, restitutions and variety, the joys of direct possession, and the joys, the artificial joys, of contrariety and comparison. He comforts the poor, and he brings down the rich, that they may be safe, in their humility and sorrow, from the transportations of an unhappy and uninstructed prosperity. He gives necessaries to all, and scatters the extraordinary provisions so, that every nation may traffic in charity, and commute for pleasures. He was the Lord of Hosts, and he is still what he was; but he loves to be called the God of Peace, because he was terrible in that, but he is delighted in this. His mercy is his glory, and his glory is the light of heaven. His mercy is the light of the creation, and it fills all the earth; and his mercy is a sea too, and it fills all the abysses of the deep: it hath given us promises for supply of whatsoever we need, and relieves us in all our fears, and in all the evils that we suffer. His mercies are more than we can tell, and they are more than we can feel: for all the world in the abyss of the divine mercies is like a man diving into the bottom of the sea, over whose head the waters run insensibly and unperceived, and yet the weight is vast, and the sum of them is unmeasurable; and the man is not pressed with the burden, nor confounded with numbers: and no observation is able to recount, no sense sufficient to perceive, no memory large enough to retain, no understanding great enough to apprehend this infinity; but we must admire, and love, and worship, and magnify this mercy for ever and

ever; that we may dwell in what we feel, and be comprehended by that which is equal to God, and the parent of all felicity.

And yet this is but the one half. The mercies of giving I have now told of; but those of forgiving are greater, though not more:—'He is ready to forgive.'—And on this stock thrives the interest of our great hope, the hope of a blessed immortality. For if the mercies of giving have not made our expectations big enough to entertain the confidences of heaven; yet when we think of the graciousness and readiness of forgiving, we may with more readiness hope to escape hell, and then we cannot but be blessed by an eternal consequence. We have but small opinion of the divine mercy, if we dare not believe concerning it, that it is desirous, and able, and watchful, and passionate, to keep us, or rescue us respectively from such a condemnation, the pain of which is insupportable, and the duration is eternal, and the extension is misery on all our faculties, and the intention is great beyond patience, or natural or supernatural abilities, and the state is a state of darkness and despair, of confusion and amazement, of cursing and roaring, anguish of spirit and gnashing of teeth, misery universal, perfect, and irremediable. From this it is which God's mercies would so fain preserve us. This is a state that God provides for his enemies, not for them that love him; that endeavor to obey, though they do it but in weakness; that weep truly for their sins, though but with a shower no bigger than the drops of pity; that wait for his coming with a holy and pure flame, though their lamps are no brighter than a poor man's candle, though their strengths are no greater than a contrite reed or a strained arm, and their fires have no more warmth than the smoke of kindling flax. If our faith be pure, and our love unfeigned; if the degrees of it be great, God will accept it into glory; if it be little, he will accept it into grace and make it bigger. For that is the first instance of God's readiness to forgive: he will, on any terms that are not unreasonable, and that do not suppose a remanent affection to sin, keep us from the intolerable pains of hell. And, indeed, if we consider the constitution of the conditions which God requires, we shall soon perceive God intends heaven to us as a

mere gift, and that the duties on our part are but little entertainments and exercises of our affections and our love, that the devil might not seize on that portion which, to eternal ages, shall be the instrument of our happiness. For, in all the parts of our duty, it may be, there is but one instance in which we are to do violence to our natural and first desires. For those men have very ill natures, to whom virtue is so contrary that they are inclined naturally to lust, to drunkenness and anger, to pride and covetousness, to unthankfulness and disobedience. Most men that are tempted with lust, could easily enough entertain the sobrieties of other counsels, as of temperance, and justice, or religion, if it would indulge to them but that one passion of lust; and persons that are greedy of money, are not fond of amorous vanities, nor care they to sit long at the wine: and one vice destroys another: and when one vice is consequent to another, it is by way of punishment and dereliction of the man, unless where vices have cognation, and seem but like several degrees of one another. And it is evil custom and superinduced habits that make artificial appetites in most men to most sins: but many times their natural temper vexes them into uneasy dispositions, and aptnesses only to some one unhandsome sort of action. That one thing, therefore, is it, in which God demands of thee mortification and self-denial.

Certain it is, there are very many men in the world, that would fain commute their severity in all other instances for a license in their one appetite; they would not refuse long prayers after a drunken meeting, or great alms together with one great lust. But then consider how easy it is for them to go to heaven. God demands of them, for his sake and their own, to crucify but one natural lust, or one evil habit (for all the rest they are easy enough to do themselves), and God will give them heaven, where the joy is more than one. And I said, it is but one mortification God requires of most men; for, if those persons would extirp but that one thing in which they are principally tempted, it is not easily imaginable that any less evil, to which the temptation is trifling, should interpose between them and their great interest. If Saul had not spared Agag, the people could not have expected mercy: and our little and inferior appetites, that rather come to us by intima-

tion and consequent adherences than by direct violence, must not dwell with him, who hath crossed the violence of his distempered nature in a beloved instance. Since, therefore, this is the state of most men, and God in effect demands of them but one thing, and, in exchange for that, will give them all good things; it gives demonstration of his huge easiness to redeem us from that intolerable evil, that is equally consequent to the indulging to one or to twenty sinful habits.

2. God's readiness to pardon appears in this, that he pardons before we ask; for he that bids us ask for pardon, hath in design and purpose done the thing already: for, what is wanting on his part, in whose only power it is to give pardon, and in whose desire it is that we should be pardoned, and who commands us to lay hold on the offer? He hath done all that belongs to God, that is, all that concerns the pardon; there it lies ready, it is recorded in the book of life, it wants nothing but being exemplified and taken forth, and the Holy Spirit stands ready to consign and pass the privy signet, that we may exhibit it to devils and evil men when they tempt us to despair or sin.

3. Nay, God is so ready in his mercy, that he did pardon us even before he redeemed us. For, what is the secret of the mystery, that the eternal Son of God should take on him our nature, and die our death, and suffer for our sins, and do our work, and enable us to do our own? He that did this, is God: he who 'thought it no robbery to be equal with God,' he came to satisfy himself, to pay to himself the price for his own creature. And when he did this for us that he might pardon us, was he at that instant angry with us? Was this an effect of his anger or of his love, that God sent his Son to work our pardon and salvation? Indeed, we were angry with God, at enmity with the Prince of life; but he was reconciled to us so far, as that he then did the greatest thing in the world for us: for nothing could be greater than that God, the Son of God, should die for us. Here was reconciliation before pardon: and God, that came to die for us, did love us first before he came. This was hasty love. But it went farther yet.

4. God pardoned us before we sinned; and when he foresaw our sin, even mine and yours, he sent his Son to die for

us: our pardon was wrought and effected by Christ's death above 1600 years ago; and for the sins of to-morrow, and the infirmities of the next day, Christ is already dead, already risen from the dead, and does now make intercession and atonement. And this is not only a favor to us who were born in the due time of the gospel, but to all mankind since Adam; for God, who is infinitely patient in his justice, was not at all patient in his mercy; he forbears to strike and punish us, but he would not forbear to provide cure for us and remedy. For, as if God could not stay from redeeming us, he promised the Redeemer to Adam in the beginning of the world's sin; and Christ was 'the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world;' and the covenant of the gospel, though it was not made with man, yet it was from the beginning performed by God as to his part, as to the ministration of pardon; the seed of the woman was set up against the dragon as soon as ever the tempter had won his first battle: and though God laid his hand, and drew a veil of types and secrecy before the manifestation of his mercies; yet he did the work of redemption, and saved us by the covenant of faith, and the righteousness of believing, and the mercies of repentance, the graces of pardon, and the blood of the slain Lamb, even from the fall of Adam to this very day, and will do till Christ's second coming.

Adam fell by his folly, and did not perform the covenant of one little work, a work of a single abstinence; but he was restored by faith in the seed of the woman. And of this righteousness Noah was a preacher: and 'by faith Enoch was translated,' and by faith a remnant was saved at the flood: and to 'Abraham this was imputed for righteousness,' and to all the patriarchs, and to all the righteous judges, and holy prophets, and saints of the Old Testament, even while they were obliged (so far as the words of their covenant were expressed) to the law of works: their pardon was sealed and kept within the veil, within the curtains of the sanctuary; and they saw it not then, but they feel it ever since. And this was a great excellency of the Divine mercy unto them. God had mercy on all mankind before Christ's manifestation, even beyond the mercies of their covenant; and they were saved as we are, by 'the seed of the woman,' by 'God incarnate,' by 'the Lamb

slain from the beginning of the world:' not by works, for we all failed of them; that is, not by an exact obedience, but by faith working by love; by sincere, hearty endeavors, and believing God, and relying on his infinite mercy, revealed in part, and now fully manifest by the great instrument and means of that mercy, Jesus Christ. So that here is pardon before we asked it, pardon before Christ's coming, pardon before redemption, and pardon before we sinned. What greater readiness to forgive us can be imagined? Yes, there is one degree more yet, and that will prevent a mistake in this.

5. For God so pardoned us once, that we should need no more pardon: he pardons us 'by turning every one of us away from our iniquities.' That is the purpose of Christ; that he might safely pardon us before we sinned, and we might not sin on the confidence of pardon. He pardoned us not only on condition we would sin no more, but he took away our sin, cured our cursed inclinations, instructed our understanding, rectified our will, fortified us against temptation; and now every man whom he pardons, he also sanctifies; and he is born of God; and he must not, will not, cannot sin, so long as the seed of God remains with him, so long as his pardon continues. This is the consummation of pardon. For if God had so pardoned us, as only to take away our evils which are past, we should have needed a second Saviour, and a Redeemer for every month, and new pardons perpetually. But our blessed Redeemer hath taken away our sin, not only the guilt of our old, but our inclinations to new sins: he makes us like himself, and commands us to live so, that we shall not need a second pardon, that is a second state of pardon: for we are but once baptised into Christ's death, and that death was but one, and our redemption but one, and our covenant the same; and as long as we continue within the covenant, we are still within the power and comprehensions of the first pardon.

6. And yet there is a necessity of having one degree of pardon more beyond all this. For although we do not abjure our covenant, and renounce Christ, and extinguish the Spirit; yet we resist him, and we grieve him, and we go off from the holiness of the covenant, and return again, and very often step aside, and need this great pardon to be perpetually applied

and renewed: and to this purpose, that we may not have a possible need without a certain remedy, the holy 'Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith' and pardon, sits in heaven in a perpetual advocation for us, that this pardon, once wrought, may be for ever applied to every emergent need, and every tumor of pride, and every broken heart, and every disturbed conscience, and on every true and sincere return of a hearty repentance. And now on this title no more degrees can be added: it is already greater, and was before all our needs, than the old covenant, and beyond the revelations, and did in Adam's youth antedate the gospel, turning the public miseries by secret grace into eternal glories. But now on other circumstances it is remarkable and excellent, and swells like an hydropic cloud when it is fed with the breath of the morning tide, till it fills the bosom of heaven, and descends in dews and gentle showers to water and refresh the earth.

7. God is so ready to forgive, that himself works our dispositions towards it, and either must, in some degree, pardon us before we are capable of pardon, by his grace making way for his mercy, or else we can never hope for pardon. For unless God, by his preventing grace, should first work the first part of our pardon, even without any dispositions of our own to receive it, we could not desire a pardon, nor hope for it, nor work towards it, nor ask it, nor receive it. This giving of preventing grace is a mercy of forgiveness contrary to that severity, by which some desperate persons are given over to a reprobate sense; that is, a leaving of men to themselves, so that they cannot pray effectually, nor desire holily, nor repent truly, nor receive any of those mercies which God designed so plenteously, and the Son of God purchased so dearly for us. When God sends a plague of war on a land, in all the accounts of religion and expectations of reason the way to obtain our peace is, to leave our sins for which the war was sent on us, as the messenger of wrath: and without this, we are like to perish in the judgment. But then consider what a sad condition we are in: war mends but few, but spoils multitudes; it legitimates rapine, and authorises murder: and these crimes must be ministered to by their lesser relatives, by covetousness, and anger, and pride, and revenge, and heats of blood, and wilder liberty, and all the

evil that can be supposed to come from, or run to, such cursed causes of mischief. But then if the punishment increases the sin, by what instrument can the punishment be removed? How shall we be pardoned and eased, when our remedies are converted into causes of the sickness, and our antidotes are poison? Here there is a plain necessity of God's preventing grace; and if there be but a necessity of it, that is enough to ascertain us we shall have it: but unless God should begin to pardon us first, for nothing, and against our own dispositions, we see there is no help in us, nor for us. If we be not smitten, we are undone; if we are smitten, we perish: and, as young Demarchus said of his love, when he was made master of his wish, *Salvus sum, quia pereo; si non peream, plane inteream;* we may say of some of God's judgments, "We perish when we are safe, because our sins are not smitten; and if they be, then we are worse undone;" because we grow worse for being miserable, but we can be relieved only by a free mercy. For pardon is the way to pardon; and when God gives us our penny, then we can work for another; and a gift is the way to a grace, and all that we can do towards it is but to take it in God's method. And this must needs be a great forwardness of forgiveness, when God's mercy gives the pardon, and the way to find it, and the hand to receive it, and the eye to search it, and the heart to desire it; being busy and effective as Elijah's fire, which, intending to convert the sacrifice into its own more spiritual nature of flames and purified substances, stood in the neighborhood of the fuel, and called forth its enemies, and licked up the hindering moisture, and the water of the trenches, and made the altar send forth a fantastic smoke before the sacrifice was enkindled. So is the preventing grace of God: it does all the work of our souls, and makes its own way, and invites itself, and prepares its own lodging, and makes its own entertainment; it gives us precepts, and makes us able to keep them; it enables our faculties, and excites our desires; it provokes us to pray, and sanctifies our heart in prayer, and makes our prayer go forth to act, and the act does make the desire valid, and the desire does make the act certain and persevering: and both of them are the works of God. For more is received into the soul from without the soul, than does proceed from within the soul;

it is more for the soul to be moved and disposed, than to work when that is done; as the passage from death to life is greater than from life to action, especially since the action is owing to that cause that put in the first principle of life.

These are the great degrees of God's forwardness and readiness to forgive, for the expression of which no language is sufficient, but God's own words describing mercy in all those dimensions, which can signify to us its greatness and infinity. His mercy 'is great,' his mercies 'are many,' his mercy 'reacheth unto the heavens,' it 'fills heaven and earth,' it is 'above all his works,' 'it endureth for ever.' 'God pitieth us as a father doth his children;' nay, he is 'our Father,' and the same also is 'the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;' so that mercy and we have the same relation: and well it may be so, for we live and die together; for as to man only God shows the mercy of forgiveness, so if God takes away his mercy, man shall be no more; no more capable of felicity, or of any thing that is perfective of his condition or his person. But as God preserves man by his mercy, so his mercy hath all its operations on man, and returns to its own centre, and incircumscription, and infinity, unless it issues forth on us. And therefore, besides the former great lines of the mercy of forgiveness, there is another chain, which but to produce, and tell its links, is to open a cabinet of jewels, where every stone is as bright as a star, and every star is great as the sun, and shines for ever, unless we shut our eyes, or draw the veil of obstinate and final sins.

1. God is long-suffering, that is, long before he be angry; and yet God is provoked every day by the obstinacy of the Jews, and the folly of the heathens, and the rudeness and infidelity of the Mahometans, and the negligence and vices of Christians: and he that can behold no impurity, is received in all places with perfumes of mushrooms, and garments spotted with the flesh, and stained souls, and the actions and issues of misbelief, and an evil conscience, and with accursed sins that he hates, on pretence of religion which he loves; and he is made a party against himself by our voluntary mistakes; and men continue ten years, and twenty, and thirty, and fifty, in a course of sinning, and they grow old with the vices of their

youth; and yet God forbears to kill them, and to consign them over to an eternity of horrid pains, still expecting they should repent and be saved.

2. Besides this long-sufferance and forbearing with an unwearied patience, God also excuses a sinner oftentimes, and takes a little thing for an excuse, so far as to move him to intermedial favors first, and from thence to a final pardon. He passes by the sins of our youth with a huge easiness to pardon, if he be entreated and reconciled by the effective repentance of a vigorous manhood. He takes ignorance for an excuse: and in every degree of its being inevitable or innocent in its proper cause, it is also inculpable and innocent in its proper effects, though in their own natures criminal. 'But I found mercy of the Lord, because I did it in ignorance,' saith St. Paul. He pities our infirmities, and strikes off much of the account on that stock: the violence of a temptation and restlessness of its motion, the perpetuity of its solicitation, the weariness of a man's spirit, the state of sickness, the necessity of secular affairs, the public customs of a people, have all of them a power of pleading and prevailing towards some degrees of pardon and diminution before the throne of God.

3. When God perceives himself forced to strike, yet then he takes off his hand, and repents him of the evil: it is as if it were against him, that any of his creatures should fall under the strokes of an exterminating fury.

4. When he is forced to proceed, he yet makes an end before he hath half done; and is as glad of a pretence to pardon us, or to strike less, as if he himself had the deliverance, and not we. When Ahab had but humbled himself at the word of the Lord, God was glad of it, and went with the message to the prophet himself, saying, 'Seest thou not how Ahab humbles himself?' What was the event of it? 'I will not bring the evil in his days; but in his son's days the evil shall come on his house.'

5. God forgets our sin, and puts it out of his remembrance; that is, he makes it as though it had never been, he makes penitence to be as pure as innocence to all the effects of pardon and glory: the memory of the sins shall not be on record, to be used to any after-act of disadvantage, and never shall re-

turn, unless we force them out of their secret places by ingratitude and a new state of sinning.

6. God sometimes gives pardon beyond all his revelations and declared will, and provides suppletories of repentances, even then when he cuts a man off from the time of repentance; accepting a temporal death instead of an eternal; that although the Divine anger might interrupt the growing of the fruits, yet in some cases, and to some persons, the death and the very cutting off shall go no farther, but be instead of explicit and long repentances. Thus it happened to Uzzah, who was smitten for his zeal, and died in severity for prevaricating the letter, by earnestness of spirit to serve the whole religion. Thus it was also in the case of the Corinthians, that died a temporal death for their indecent circumstances in receiving the holy sacrament: St. Paul, who used it for an argument to threaten them into reverence, went no farther, nor pressed the argument to a sadder issue, than to die temporally.

But these suppletories are but seldom, and they are also great troubles, and ever without comfort, and dispensed irregularly, and that not in the case of habitual sins, that we know of, or very great sins, but in single actions, or instances of a less malignity; and they are not to be relied on, because there is no rule concerning them: but when they do happen, they magnify the infiniteness of God's mercy, which is commensurate to all our needs, and is not to be circumscribed by the limits of his own revelations.

7. God pardons the greatest sinners, and hath left them on record: and there is no instance in the Scripture of the Divine forgiveness, but in such instances, the misery of which was a fit instrument to speak aloud the glories of God's mercies, and gentleness, and readiness to forgive. Such were St. Paul, a persecutor,—and St. Peter, that forswore his Master,—Mary Magdalene, with seven devils,—the thief on the cross,—Manasses, an idolater,—David, a murderer and adulterer,—the Corinthian, for incest,—the children of Israel, for ten times rebelling against the Lord in the wilderness, with murmuring, and infidelity, and rebellion, and schism, and a golden calf, and open disobedience: and above all, I shall instance in the Pharisees among the Jews, who had sinned against the Holy

Ghost, as our blessed Saviour intimates, and tells the particular, namely, in saying that the Spirit of God, by which Christ did work, was an evil spirit; and afterward they crucified Christ; so that two of the persons of the most holy Trinity were openly and solemnly defied, and God had sent out a decree that they should be cut off: yet forty years' time, after all this, was left for their repentance, and they were called on by arguments more persuasive and more excellent in that forty years, than all the nation had heard from their prophets, even from Samuel to Zecharias. And Jonah thought he had reason on his side to refuse to go to threaten Nineveh; he knew God's tenderness in destroying his creatures, and that he should be thought to be but a false prophet; and so it came to pass according to his belief. 'Jonah prayed unto the Lord, and said, I pray thee, Lord, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled; for I knew thou wert a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.'* He told beforehand what the event would be; and he had reason to know it; God proclaimed it in a cloud before the face of all Israel, and made it to be his name: *Miserator et misericors Deus:* 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious,'† &c.

You see the largeness of this treasure; but we can see no end, for we have not yet looked on the rare arts of conversion; nor that God leaves the natural habit of virtues, even after the acceptation is interrupted; nor his working extra-regular miracles, besides the sufficiency of Moses, and the prophets, and the New Testament; and thousands more, which we cannot consider now.

But this we can: when God sent an angel to pour plagues on the earth, there were in their hands *phiala aureæ*, 'golden phials:' for the death of men is precious and costly, and it is an expense that God delights not in: but they were phials, that is, such vessels as out of them no great evil could come at once; but it comes out with difficulty, sobbing and troubled as it passes forth; it comes through a narrow neck, and the parts of it crowd at the port to get forth, and are stifled by each

* Jonah, iv. 2. † Exod. xxxiv. 6.

other's neighborhood, and all strive to get out, but few can pass; as if God did nothing but threaten, and draw his judgments to the mouth of the phial with a full body, and there made it stop itself.

The result of this consideration is, that as we fear the Divine judgments, so we adore and love his goodness, and let the golden chains of the Divine mercy tie us to a noble prosecution of our duty and the interest of religion. For he is the worst of men whom kindness cannot soften, nor endearment oblige, whom gratitude cannot tie faster than the bands of life and death. He is an ill-natured sinner, if he will not comply with the sweetnesses of heaven, and be civil to his angel-guardian, or observant of his patron God, who made him, and feeds him, and keeps all his faculties, and takes care of him, and endures his follies, and waits on him more tenderly than a nurse, more diligently than a client, who hath greater care of him than his father, and whose bowels yearn over him with more compassion than a mother; who is bountiful beyond our need, and merciful beyond our hopes, and makes capacities in us to receive more. Fear is stronger than death, and love is more prevalent than fear, and kindness is the greatest endearment of love; and yet to an ingenuous person, gratitude is greater than all these, and obliges to a solemn duty, when love fails, and fear is dull and inactive, and death itself is despised. But the man who is hardened against kindness, and whose duty is not made alive with gratitude, must be used like a slave, and driven like an ox, and enticed with goads and whips; but must never enter into the inheritance of sons. Let us take heed; for mercy is like a rainbow, which God set in the clouds to remember mankind: it shines here as long as it is not hindered; but we must never look for it after it is night, and it shines not in the other world. If we refuse mercy here, we shall have justice to eternity.

ΔΕΚΑΣ ΕΜΒΟΛΙΜΑΙΟΣ:

A SUPPLEMENT

TO THE

ΕΝΙΑΥΤΟΣ,

OR,

COURSE OF SERMONS FOR THE WHOLE YEAR:

BEING

TEN SERMONS,

EXPLAINING

THE NATURE OF FAITH AND OBEDIENCE, IN RELATION TO GOD, AND THE ECCLESIASTICAL AND SECULAR POWERS, RESPECTIVELY.

TO THE

MOST NOBLE AND VIRTUOUS PRINCESS,

THE

LADY DUCHESS OF ORMOND,

HER GRACE.

MADAM,

I PRESENT your Grace herewith a testimony of my obedience, and of your own zeal for the good of souls. You were, in your great charity, not only pleased to pardon the weakness of this discourse,* but to hope it might serve as a memorial to those that need it, of the great necessity of living virtuously, and by the measures of Christianity. Madam, you are too great and too good to have any ambition for the things of this world; but I cannot but observe, that in your designs for the other world, you, by your charity and zeal, adopt yourself into the portion of those ecclesiastics, who humbly hope, and truly labor, for the reward that is promised to those wise persons who convert souls, if our prayers and your desires that every one should be profited in their eternal concerns, cast in a symbol towards this great work, and will give you a title to that great reward; but, Madam, when I received your commands for dispersing some copies of this sermon, I perceived it was too little to be presented to your eminence; and if it were accompanied with something else of the like nature, it might, with more profit, advance that end which your Grace so piously de-

* This and the two following Discourses were preached at Christ Church, Dublin, and respectively entitled, "The Righteousness Evangelical Described:"—"The Christian's Conquest over the Body of Sin:"—"Fides Formata; or, Faith working by Love."

signed; and, therefore, I have taken this opportunity to satisfy the desire of some very honorable and very reverend personages, who required that the two following sermons should also be made fit for the use of those who hoped to receive profit by them. I humbly lay them all at your Grace's feet, begging of God, that even as many may receive advantages by the perusing of them, as either your Grace will desire, or he that preached them did intend. And if your Grace will accept of this first testimony of my concurrence with all the world that know you, in paying those great regards, which your piety so highly merits, I will endeavor hereafter, in some greater instance, to pursue the intentions of your zeal of souls, and, by such a service, endeavor to do more benefit to others, and by it, as by that which is most acceptable to your Grace, endear the obedience and services of,

MADAM,

Your Grace's most humble

And obedient servant,

JER. DOWN.

SUMMARY OF SERMON I.

MATTHEW, CHAP. V.—VERSE 20.

REWARDS and punishments are the best sanction of laws; and although their guardians sometimes strike softly in their execution of sad sentences, yet in the sanction they make no abatements, but so proportion the duty to the reward, and the punishment to the crime, that by these we can best tell what value the lawgiver puts on obedience. And therefore the law of Moses, whose rewards were merely temporal, *could never make the comers thereunto perfect;* but *the superinduction of a better hope* hath endeared a more perfect obedience. Christ having brought life and immortality to light, &c. we are enabled to do all that God requires; and he requires all we can do: this enlarged on.

The matter required in the text is certainly very great; for it is to be more righteous than the Scribes and Pharisees, more holy than the doctors of the law, more virtuous than some that were prophets and high priests, &c.: this topic enlarged on.

Here then we have two things to consider; 1. what was the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees; 2. how far that is to be exceeded by the righteousness of Christians.

1. Concerning the first; we need not be so nice in the observation of these words, as to take notice that Christ does not name the Sadducees, though there may be something in it: this explained.

The Pharisees obeyed the commandments in the letter, not in the spirit: they minded what God spake, but not what he intended: they were busy in the outward works of the hand,

but incurious of the affections and choice of the heart: this topic enlarged on.

2. In moral duties, where God expressed himself more plainly, they made no commentary of kindness, but regarded the prohibition so nakedly, that if they stood clear of that hated name which was set down in Moses's tables, they gave themselves a liberty, in many instances, of the same kindred and alliance: this illustrated.

3. They placed their righteousness in negatives, they would not commit what was forbidden, but they cared little for the included positive duty; and the omission of good actions did not much trouble them.

4. Still worse than this, they broke Moses's tables into pieces, and gathering up the fragments, took to themselves what part of duty they pleased, but let the rest alone. Lastly, St. Austin summed up the difference between pharisaical and evangelical righteousness in two words, *timor* and *amor*: they served the God of their fathers *in the spirit of fear*; we worship the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ *in the spirit of love* and of adoption. Hence they would do, 1. all that they thought they lawfully could do: 2. they would do nothing but what was expressly commanded.

This was the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, and of their disciples the Jews, which our Saviour reproves, and calls us on to a new righteousness, that of God, the law of the spirit of life, &c.: it concerns us therefore to look after the measures of this; it being a question of life and death eternal.

Now concerning this, we shall do very much amiss if we take our account from the manners and practices of the many who call themselves Christians; for there are *the old and the new Pharisees*. Indeed it would be well if it were no worse. But the world is too full of Christians, whose righteousness is very little and their iniquities very great. But let us leave off com-

plaining, and go to the rule, and describe the necessary measures of righteousness evangelical.

1. Therefore, when it is said, that our *righteousness must exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees*, let us first take notice, by way of precognition, that it must be at least so much: we must keep the letter of the whole moral law: we must not do less than the Pharisees, who did the outward work, &c.: this topic enlarged on.

This much being supposed, our question is, how much more must we do? And the first measure is this: whatsoever can be signified and ministered to by the body, in that the heart or spirit of a man must be the principal actor. We must not give alms without a charitable soul, nor suffer martyrdom but in love and obedience: and when we say our prayers, we mispend our time, unless our mind ascend up to God on the wings of desire, for desire is the life of prayer: this enlarged on. Solemn prayers, and the sacraments, and the assemblies of the faithful, and fasts, and acts of external worship, are the solemnities and rites of religion; but the religion of a Christian is in the heart and spirit. True it is, God works in us his graces by the sacrament; but we must dispose ourselves to a reception of the Divine blessing by moral instruments.

2. The righteousness evangelical must exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees by extension of our obedience to things of the same signification. There must be a commentary of kindness in understanding the laws of Christ. We must understand all God's meaning; we must secure his service; we must be far removed from the dangers of his displeasure. And therefore our righteousness must be the purification and perfection of the spirit; so that it will be nothing for us not to commit adultery, unless our eyes be chaste and our desires clean. A Christian must not be lustful; and therefore he must not feed high, nor drink deep; for these things make provision for lust: this topic enlarged on.

3. Of the same consideration also it is, that we understand Christ's commandments to extend our duty, not only to what is named, and what is not named, of the same nature and design; but that we abstain from all such things as are like unto sins. Of this nature there are many; as all violence of passion, gaming, prodigality of our time, indecency of action, easiness to believe evil of others, curiosity of diet, excess in ornaments, &c. He is dull of hearing indeed, who understands not the voice of God, unless it be clamorous in an express and loud commandment. Thus much concerning the first sort of measures of Christian righteousness; those of caution and negative duty. But there are greater things yet behind.

4. The fourth thing noted therefore is, that Christian righteousness must be universal; not a little knot of holy actions scattered in our lives, and drawn into a sum at the day of judgment, but it must be a state of holiness. One duty cannot be changed or interposed for another; and three virtues will not make amends for one remaining vice: this topic fully enlarged on.

5. Lastly, pharisaical righteousness was the product of fear; and therefore what they must needs do, that they would do; but no more. But the righteousness evangelical is produced by love, managed by choice, cherished by delight and fair experiences. Christians are a willing people; and no man hath this righteousness, if he resolves to take all the liberty that is merely lawful, or to do no more than is just commanded him: the reasons of which are plain: for, 1. The Christian that resolves to do every thing that is lawful will many times run into danger and inconvenience; and the lines of right and wrong are so nice, that he will often pass into what is unlawful imperceptibly. 2. He that will do all that he thinks he may lawfully do, need have an infallible guide always by him, to answer every case of conscience; for if he should be mistaken, his error is his crime, and not his

excuse. 3. He cannot be innocent, so long as there are in the world so many bold temptations and presumptuous actions, so many scandals, and so much ignorance of the things of God, so many things that are suspicious, and of evil report, &c. 4. Besides all this, he that thus stands on his terms with God, and so husbands his duty, will never be exemplary in his life, or grow in grace, and therefore will never enter into glory.

And the case is very similar with them that resolve to do no more good than is commanded them: for no man does do all that is commanded him at all times; therefore he that will not sometimes do something more, besides that he hath no love and holy zeal, can never make any amends towards the reparation of his failings; &c.

We must also know, that in keeping God's commandments, every degree of internal duty is under them; and therefore, whatever we do, we must do it as well as we can: this topic enlarged on.

To this description of Christian righteousness as above, and opposed to the pharisaical, it must be added, that our blessed Saviour's precept is to be extended to the direct degrees of our duty. We must do more duties; and we must do them better. And though this be understood of the internal affection, because that must never be abated (for God is always to be loved and served with all our heart); yet, concerning the degrees of external duty, as prayers, alms, and the like, we are tied to a greater excellency in this degree, than were the Scribes and Pharisees. Farther consideration extended to this inquiry, namely, to how much more of external duty Christians are thus obliged. The sum of all declared to be; that the righteousness evangelical is the same as that which the ancients called "to lead an apostolical life:" this enlarged on to the end.

SERMON I.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS EVANGELICAL DESCRIBED.

MATTHEW, CHAP. V.—VERSE 20.

For I say unto you, that except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

REWARDS and punishments are the best sanction of laws; and although the guardians of laws strike sometimes with the softest part of the hand in their executions of sad sentences, yet in the sanction they make no abatements, but so proportion the duty to the reward, and the punishment to the crime, that by these we can best tell what value the lawgiver puts on the obedience. Joshua put a great rate on the taking of Kiriath-Sepher, when the reward of the service was his daughter and a dower; but when the young men ventured to fetch David the waters of Bethlehem, they had nothing but the praise of their boldness, because their service was no more than the satisfaction of a curiosity. But as lawgivers, by their rewards, declare the value of the obedience, so do subjects also, by the grandeur of what they expect, set a value on the law and the lawgiver, and do their services accordingly.

And, therefore, the law of Moses, whose endearment was nothing but temporal goods and transient evils, 'could never make the comers thereunto perfect;' but the ἐπεισαγωγὴ κρείτ-

τονος ἐλπίδος, 'the superinduction of a better hope,'* hath endeared a more perfect obedience. When Christ brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, and hath promised to us things greater than all our explicit desires, bigger than the thoughts of our heart, then ἐγγίζομεν τῷ Θεῷ, saith the Apostle, 'then we draw near to God;' and by these we are enabled to do all that God requires, and then he requires all that we can do; more love and more obedience than he did of those who,—for want of these helps, and these revelations, and these promises, which we have, but they had not,—were but imperfect persons, and could do but little more than human services. Christ hath taught us more, and given us more, and promised to us more, than ever was in the world known or believed before him; and by the strengths and confidence of these, thrusts us forward in a holy and wise economy; and plainly declares, that we must serve him by the measures of a new love, do him honor by wise and material glorifications, be united to God by a new nature, and made alive by a new birth, and fulfil all righteousness; to be humble and meek as Christ, to be merciful as our heavenly Father is, to be pure as God is pure, to be partakers of the Divine nature, to be wholly renewed in the frame and temper of our mind, to become people of a new heart, a direct new creation, new principles, and a new being, to do better than all the world before us ever did, to love God more perfectly, to despise the world more generously, to contend for the faith more earnestly; for all this is but a proper and a just consequent of the great promises, which our blessed Lawgiver came to publish and effect for all the world of believers and disciples.

The matter which is here required, is certainly very great; for it is to be more righteous than the Scribes and Pharisees; more holy than the doctors of the law, than the leaders of the synagogue, than the wise princes of the sanhedrim; more righteous than some that were prophets and high priests, than some that kept the ordinances of the law without blame; men that lay in sackcloth, and fasted much, and prayed more, and made religion and the study of the law the work of their lives: this was very much; but Christians must do more.

* Heb. vii. 19.

Nunc te marmoreum pro tempore fecimus; at tu,
Si fœtura gregem suppleverit, aureus esto.

They did well, and we must do better; their houses were marble, but our roofs must be gilded and fuller of glory. But as the matter is very great, so the necessity of it is the greatest in the world. It must be so, or it will be much worse: unless it be thus, we shall never see the glorious face of God. Here it concerns us to be wise and fearful; for the matter is not a question of an oaken garland, or a circle of bays, and a yellow riband: it is not a question of money or land; nor of the vainer rewards of popular noises, and the undiscerning suffrages of the people, who are contingent judges of good and evil: but it is the great stake of life eternal. We cannot be Christians, unless we be righteous by the new measures: the righteousness of the kingdom is now the only way to enter into it; for the sentence is fixed, and the judgment is decretory, and the Judge infallible, and the decree irreversible: 'For I say unto you,' said Christ, 'unless your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in nowise enter into the kingdom of heaven.'

Here, then, we have two things to consider. 1. What was the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees. 2. How far that is to be exceeded by the righteousness of Christians.

1. Concerning the first. I will not be so nice in the observation of these words, as to take notice that Christ does not name the Sadducees, but the Scribes and Pharisees, though there may be something in it: the Sadducees were called "Caraim," from *cara*, "to read;" for they thought it religion to spend one-third part of their day in reading their Scriptures, whose fulness they so admired, they would admit of no suppletory traditions: but the Pharisees were called "Thanaim," that is, *δευτερώται*, they added to the word of God words of their own, as the church of Rome does at this day; they and these fell into an equal fate; while they 'taught for doctrines the commandments of men,' they prevaricated the righteousness of God: what the church of Rome, to evil purposes, hath done in this particular, may be demonstrated in due time and place; but what false and corrupt glosses, under the specious

title of the tradition of their fathers, the Pharisees had introduced, our blessed Saviour reproves, and are now to be represented as the ἀντιπαράδειγμα, that you may see that righteousness, beyond which all they must go, that intend that heaven should be their journey's end.

The Pharisees obeyed the commandments in the letter, not in the spirit: they minded what God spake, but not what he intended: they were busy in the outward work of the hand, but incurious of the affections and choice of the heart. Ὑμεῖς πάντα σαρκικῶς νενοήκατε, said Justin Martyr to Tryphon the Jew, "Ye understand all things carnally;" that is, they rested ἐν πλάσματι εὐσεβείας, as Nazianzen calls it, "in the outward work of piety," which not only Justin Martyr, but St. Paul calls 'carnality,' not meaning a carnal appetite, but a carnal service.* Their error was plainly this: they never distinguished duties natural from duties relative; that is, whether it were commanded for itself, or in order to something that was better; whether it were a principal grace, or an instrumental action: so God was served in the letter, they did not much inquire into his purpose: and, therefore, they were curious to wash their hands, but cared not to purify their hearts; they would give alms, but hate him that received it; they would go to the temple, but did not revere the glory of God that dwelt there between the cherubim; they would fast, but not mortify their lusts; they would say good prayers, but not labor for the grace they prayed for. This was just as if a man should run on his master's errand, and do no business when he came there. They might easily have thought, that by the soul only a man approaches to God, and draws the body after it; but that no washing or corporal services could unite them and the shechinah together, no such thing could make them like to God, who is the Prince of Spirits. They did as the dunces in Pythagoras's school, who,—when their master had said *Fabis abstineto*, by which he intended, "they should not ambitiously seek for magistracy,"—they thought themselves good Pythagoreans if they "did not eat beans;" and they would be sure to put their right foot first into the shoe, and their left foot into the

* Gal. iii. 3. and vi. 12, 13. Phil. iii. 34.

water, and supposed they had done enough; though if they had not been fools, they would have understood their master's meaning to have been, that they should put more affections to labor and travel, and less to their pleasure and recreation; and so it was with the Pharisee: for as the Chaldees taught their morality by mystic words, and the Egyptians by hieroglyphics, and the Greeks by fables; so did God by rites and ceremonies external, leading them by the hand to the purities of the heart, and by the services of the body to the obedience of the spirit; which because they would not understand, they thought they had done enough in the observation of the letter.

2. In moral duties, where God expressed himself more plainly, they made no commentary of kindness, but regarded the prohibition so nakedly, and divested of all antecedents, consequents, similitudes, and proportions, that if they stood clear of that hated name which was set down in Moses's tables, they gave themselves liberty, in many instances, of the same kindred and alliance. If they abstained from murder, they thought it very well, though they made no scruple of murdering their brother's fame: they would not cut his throat, but they would call him fool, or invent lies in secret, and publish his disgrace openly: they would not dash out his brains, but they would be extremely and unreasonably angry with him: they would not steal their brother's money, but they would oppress him in crafty and cruel bargains. The commandment forbade them to commit adultery; but because fornication was not named, they made no scruple of that; and being commanded to honor their father and their mother, they would give them good words and fair observances; but because it was not named that they should maintain them in their need, they thought they did well enough to pretend *corban*, and let their father starve.

3. The Scribes and Pharisees placed their righteousness in negatives: they would not commit what was forbidden, but they cared but little for the included positive, and the omissions of good actions did not much trouble them; they would not hurt their brother in a forbidden instance, but neither would they do him good according to the intention of the commandment. It was a great innocence if they did not rob the poor,—then they were righteous men; but they thought themselves not

much concerned to acquire that godlike excellency, a philanthropy and love to all mankind. Whosoever blasphemed God was to be put to death; but he that did not glorify God as he ought, they were unconcerned for him, and let him alone. He that spake against Moses, was to die without mercy; but against the ambitious and the covetous, against the proud man and the unmerciful, they made no provisions.

> Virtus est vitium fugere, et sapientia prima
> Stultitia caruisse.*

They accounted themselves good, not for doing good, but for doing no evil; that was the sum of their theology.

4. They had one thing more as bad as all this: they broke Moses's tables into pieces, and, gathering up the fragments, took to themselves what part of duty they pleased, and let the rest alone; for it was a proverb amongst the Jews, *Qui operam dat præcepto, liber est a præcepto;* that is, "if he chooses one positive commandment for his business, he may be less careful in any of the rest." Indeed, they said also, *Qui multiplicat legem, multiplicat vitam;* "He that multiplies the law, increases life:" that is, if he did attend to more good things, it was so much the better, but the other was well enough; but as for universal obedience, that was not the measure of their righteousness; for they taught that God would put our good works and bad into the balance, and according to the heavier scale, give a portion in the world to come; so that some evil they would allow to themselves and their disciples, always provided it was less than the good they did. They would devour widows' houses, and make it up by long prayers; they would love their nation, and hate their prince; offer sacrifice, and curse Cæsar in their heart; advance Judaism, and destroy humanity.

Lastly: St. Austin summed up the difference between the pharisaical and evangelical righteousness in two words; *Brevis differentia inter legem et evangelium; timor et amor.* They served the God of their fathers 'in the spirit of fear,' and we worship the Father of our Lord Jesus 'in the spirit of love,' and by the spirit of adoption. And as this slavish principle of

* Hor. Ep. i. 1. 41.

theirs was the cause of all their former imperfections, so it finally and chiefly expressed itself in these two particulars:—1. they would do all that they thought they lawfully could do: 2. they would do nothing but what was expressly commanded.

This was the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, and their disciples, the Jews;* which, because our blessed Saviour reproves, not only as imperfect then, but as criminal now, calling us on to a new righteousness, the righteousness of God, to the law of the Spirit of life, to the kingdom of God, and the proper righteousness thereof,—it concerns us, in the next place, to look after the measures of this, ever remembering that it is infinitely necessary that we should do so; and men do not generally know, or not consider, what it is to be a Christian; they understand not what the Christian law forbiddeth or commandeth. But as for this in my text, it is, indeed, our great measure; but it is not a question of good and better, but of good and evil, life and death, salvation and damnation; for unless our righteousness be weighed by new weights, we shall be found too light, when God comes to weigh the actions of all the world; and unless we be more righteous than they, we 'shall in nowise,' that is, on no other terms in the world, 'enter into the kingdom of heaven.'

Now concerning this, we shall do very much amiss, if we take our measures by the manners and practices of the many who call themselves Christians; for there are, as Nazianzen expresses it, the *οἱ τότε καὶ νῦν Φαρισαῖοι*, "the old and the new Pharisees." I wish it were no worse amongst us; and that all Christians were indeed righteous as they were; *est aliquid prodire tenus;* it would not be just nothing. But I am sure that to bid defiance to the laws of Christ, to laugh at religion, to make a merriment at the debauchery and damnation of our brother, is a state of evil worse than that of the Scribes and Pharisees; and yet, even among such men, how impatient would they be, and how unreasonable would they think you to be, if you should tell them, that there are no present hopes or possibility, that, in this state they are in, they can be saved!

* Sed Beelzebulis callida commenta Christus destruit.

Omnes videmur nobis esse belluli
Et festivi saperdæ, cum simus σαπροί.*

But the world is too full of Christians, whose righteousness is very little, and their iniquities very great; and now-a-days, a Christian is a man that comes to church on Sundays, and on the week following will do shameful things;

Passim corvos sequitur, testaque lutoque,
Securus quo pes ferat, atque ex tempore vivit;

being, according to the Jewish proverbial reproof, as so many Mephibosheths: *discipuli sapientum, qui incessu pudefaciunt præceptorem suum;* "their master teaches them to go uprightly, but they still show their lame leg, and shame their master;" as if a man might be a Christian, and yet be the vilest person in the world, doing such things for which the laws of men have provided smart and shame, and the laws of God have threatened the intolerable pains of an insufferable and never-ending damnation. Example here cannot be our rule, unless men were much better; and, as long as men live at the rate they do, it will be to little purpose to talk of exceeding the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees; but because it must be much better with us all, or it will be very much worse with us at the latter end, I shall leave complaining, and go to the rule, and describe the necessary and unavoidable measures of the righteousness evangelical, without which we can never be saved.

1. Therefore, when it is said our 'righteousness must exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees,' let us first take notice, by way of precognition, that it must at least be so much; we must keep the letter of the whole moral law; we must do all that lies before us, all that is in our hand: and therefore ὀργιάζεσθαι, which signifies "to be religious," the grammarians derive ἀπὸ τοῦ χεῖρας ὀρέγεσθαι, "from reaching forth the hand:" the outward work must be done; and it is not enough to say, "My heart is right, but my hand went aside." Prudentius saith that St. Peter wept so bitterly, because he did not confess Christ openly, whom he loved secretly.

* Var. ap. Non. c. ii. n. 823.

Flevit negator denique
Ex ore prolapsum nefas,
Cum mens maneret innocens,
Animusque servarit fidem.

A right heart alone will not do it; or rather, the heart is not right, when the hand is wrong. 'If a man strikes his neighbor, and says, Am not I in jest? it is folly and shame to him,' said Solomon. For, once for all, let us remember this, that Christianity is the most profitable, the most useful, and the most bountiful institution in the whole world; and the best definition I can give of it is this;—It is the wisdom of God brought down among us, to do good to men, and therefore we must not do less than the Pharisees, who did the outward work; at least, let us be sure to do all the work that is laid before us in the commandments. And it is strange that this should be needful to be pressed amongst Christians, whose religion requires so very much more. But so it is, on a pretence that we must serve God with the mind, some are such fools as to think that it is enough to have a good meaning. *Iniquum perpol verbum est, 'bene vult,' nisi qui bene facit.* And because we must serve God in the spirit, therefore they will not serve God with their bodies; and because they are called on to have the power and the life of godliness, they abominate all external works as mere forms; and because the true fast is to abstain from sin, therefore they will not abstain from meat and drink, even when they are commanded; which is just as if a Pharisee, being taught the circumcision of the heart, should refuse to circumcise his flesh; and as if a Christian, being instructed in the excellences of spiritual communion, should wholly neglect the sacramental; that is, because the soul is the life of man, therefore it is fitting to die in a humor, and lay aside the body. This is a taking away the subject of the question; for our inquiry is,—how we should keep the commandments; how we are to do the work that lies before us, by what principles, with what intention, in what degrees, after what manner, *ut bonum bene fiat*, "that the good thing be done well." This, therefore, must be presupposed: we must take care that even our bodies bear a part in our spiritual services. Our voice and tongue, our hands and our feet, and

our very bowels must be servants of God, and do the work of the commandments.

This being ever supposed, our question is, how much more we must do? and the first measure is this,—whatsoever can be signified and ministered to by the body, the heart and the spirit of a man must be the principal actor. We must not give alms without a charitable soul, nor suffer martyrdom but in love and in obedience; and when we say our prayers, we do but mispend our time, unless our mind ascend up to God on the wings of desire.

Desire is the life of prayer; and if you indeed desire what you pray for, you will also labor for what you desire: and if you find it otherwise with yourselves, your coming to church is but like the Pharisees going up to the temple to pray. If your heart be not present, neither will God; and then there is a sound of men and women between a pair of dead walls, from whence, because neither God nor your souls are present, you must needs go home without a blessing.

But this measure of evangelical righteousness is of principal remark in all the rites and solemnities of religion; and intends to say this, that Christian religion is something that is not seen, it is the hidden man of the heart; ἐστί τις Θεὸς ἔνδον, "it is God that dwells within;" and true Christians are men, who, as the Chaldee oracle said, are πολὺν ἐσσάμενοι νοῦν, "clothed with a great deal of mind." And, therefore, those words of the prophet Hosea, *Et loquar ad cor ejus*, "I will speak unto his heart," is a proverbial expression, signifying to speak spiritual comforts, and, in the mystical sense, signifies εὐαγγελίζειν, 'to preach the gospel:' where the Spirit is the preacher, and the heart is the disciple, and the sermon is of righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Our service to God must not be in outward works and scenes of religion, it must be something by which we become like to God; the Divine prerogative must extend beyond the outward man, nay, even beyond the mortification of corporal vices; the Spirit of God must go *in trabis crassitudinem*, and mollify all our secret pride, and ingenerate in us a true humility, and a Christian meekness of spirit, and a divine charity. For in the gospel, when God enjoins any external rite or ceremony, the outward

work is always the less principal. For there is a bodily and a carnal part, an outside, and a cabinet of religion in Christianity itself. When we are baptised, the purpose of God is, that we cleanse ourselves from all pollution of the flesh and spirit, and then we are, indeed, καθαροὶ ὅλοι, "clean all over." And when we communicate, the commandment means that we should be made one spirit with Christ, and should live on him, believing his word, praying for his Spirit, supported with his hope, refreshed by his promises, recreated by his comforts, and wholly, and in all things, conformable to his life; that is the true communion. The sacraments are not made for sinners, until they do repent; they are the food of our souls, but our souls must be alive unto God, or else they cannot eat. It is good to 'confess our sins,' as St. James says, and to open our wounds to the ministers of religion; but they absolve none but such as are truly penitent.

Solemn prayers, and the sacraments, and the assemblies of the faithful, and fasting days, and acts of external worship, are the solemnities and rites of religion; but the religion of a Christian is in the heart and spirit. And this is that by which Clemens Alexandrinus defined the righteousness of a Christian, Δικαιοσύνη συμφωνία τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς μερῶν· "all the parts and faculties that make up a man, must make up our religion:" but the heart is *domus principalis*, it is "the court" of the great King; and he is properly served with interior graces and moral virtues, with a humble and a good mind, with a bountiful heart and a willing soul, and these will command the eye, and give laws to the hand, and make the shoulders stoop; but *anima cujusque est quisque;* "a man's soul is the man," and so is his religion; and so you are bound to understand it.

True it is, God works in us his graces by the sacrament; but we must dispose ourselves to a reception of the Divine blessing by moral instruments. The soul is συνεργὸς τῷ Θεῷ, 'it must work together with God;' and the body works together with the soul: but no external action can purify the soul, because, its nature and operations being spiritual, it can no more be changed by a ceremony or an external solemnity, than an angel can be caressed with sweetmeats, or a man's

belly can be filled with music or long orations. The sum is this: no Christian does his duty to God but he that serves him with all his heart: and although it becomes us to fulfil all righteousness, even the external also; yet that which makes us gracious in his eyes, is not the external; it is the love of the heart, and the real change of the mind, and obedience of the spirit; that is the first great measure of the righteousness evangelical.

2. The righteousness evangelical must exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees by extension of our obedience to things of the same signification: *Leges non ex verbis, sed ex mente intelligendas*, says the law.* There must be a commentary of kindness in understanding the laws of Christ. We must understand all God's meaning; we must secure his service; we must be far removed from the dangers of his displeasure; and, therefore, our righteousness must be the purification and the perfection of the spirit. So that it will be nothing for us not to commit adultery, unless our eyes and hands be chaste, and the desires be clean. A Christian must not look on a woman to lust after her. He must hate sin in all dimensions, and in all distances, and in every angle of its reception. A Christian must not sin, and he must not be willing to sin if he durst. He must not be lustful, and therefore he must not feed high, nor drink deep, for these make provisions for lust: and, amongst Christians, great eatings and drinkings are acts of uncleanness as well as of intemperance; and whatever ministers to sin, and is the way of it, it partakes of its nature and its curse.

For it is remarkable that in good and evil the case is greatly different. Mortification (e. g.) is a duty of Christianity; but there is no law concerning the instruments of it. We are not commanded to roll ourselves on thorns, as St. Benedict did; or to burn our flesh, like St. Martinian; or to tumble in snows, with St. Francis; or in pools of water, with St. Bernard. A man may chew aloes, or lie on the ground, or wear sackcloth, if he have a mind to it, and if he finds it good in his circumstances and to his purposes of mortification; but, it may be, he may do it alone by the instrumentalities of fear and love;

* De Legibus.

and so the thing be done, no special instrument is under a command. But although the instruments of virtue are free, yet instruments and ministries of vice are not. Not only the sin is forbidden, but all the ways that lead to it. The instruments of virtue are of themselves indifferent, that is, not naturally, but good only for their relation's sake, and in order to their end. But the instruments of vice are of themselves vicious; they are part of the sin, they have a share in the fantastic pleasure, and they begin to estrange a man's heart from God, and are directly in the prohibition. For we are commanded to fly from temptation, to pray against it, 'to abstain from all appearances of evil,' 'to make a covenant with our eyes,' 'to pluck them out,' if there be need. And if Christians do not understand the commandments to this extension of signification, they will be innocent only by the measures of human laws, but not by the righteousness of God.

3. Of the same consideration it is also that we understand Christ's commandments to extend our duty, not only to what is named, and what is not named of the same nature and design; but that we abstain from all such things as are like to sins. Of this nature there are many. All violences of passion, irregularities in gaming, prodigality of our time, indecency of action, doing things unworthy of our birth or our profession, aptness to go to law; *ambitus*, or a fierce prosecution even of honorable employments; misconstruction of the words and actions of our brother; easiness to believe evil of others; willingness to report the evil which we hear; curiosity of diet, peevishness towards servants, indiscreet and importune standing for place, and all excess in ornaments; for even this little instance is directly prohibited by the Christian and royal law of charity. For *ἀγάπη οὐ περπερεύεται*, saith St. Paul; the word is a word hard to be understood; we render it well enough, 'charity *vaunteth* not itself;' and on this St. Basil says, that an ecclesiastic person (and so every Christian in his proportion) ought not to go in splendid and vain ornaments; *Πᾶν γὰρ ὁ μὴ διὰ χρείαν, ἀλλὰ διὰ καλλωπισμὸν παραλαμβάνεται, περπερείας ἔχει κατηγορίαν·* "Every thing that is not wisely useful or proportioned to the state of the Christian, but ministers only to vanity, is a part of this *περπερεύεσθαι*," it is a 'vaunting,'

which the charity and the grace of a Christian does not well endure. These things are like to sins; they are of a suspicious nature, and not easily to be reconciled to the righteousness evangelical. It is no wonder if Christianity be nice and curious; it is the cleanness and the purification of the soul, and Christ intends to present his church to God ἄσπιλον καὶ ἀμώμητον, 'without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.' N.B. *or any such thing*. If there be any irregularity that is less than a wrinkle, the evangelical righteousness does not allow it. These are such things, which, if men will stand to defend, possibly a modest reprover may be more ashamed than an impudent offender. If I see a person apt to quarrel, to take every thing in an ill sense, to resent an error deeply, to reprove it bitterly, to remember it tenaciously, to repeat it frequently, to upbraid it unhandsomely, I think I have great reason to say, that this person does not do what becomes the sweetness of a Christian spirit. If it be replied, it is no where forbidden to chide an offending person, and that it cannot be a fault to understand when a thing is said or done amiss; I cannot return an answer, but by saying, that suppose nothing of it were a sin, yet that every thing of it is so like a sin, that it is the worse for it; and that it were better not to do so; at least I think so, and so ought you too, if you be curious of your eternal interest: a little more tenderness here would do well. I cannot say that this dress, or this garment, or this standing for place, is the direct sin of pride; but I am sure it looks like it in some persons; at least, the letting it alone is much better, and is very like humility. And certain it is, that he is dull of hearing who understands not the voice of God, unless it be clamorous in an express and a loud commandment, proclaimed with trumpets and clarions on Mount Sinai; but a willing and an obedient ear understands the still voice of Christ; and is ready to obey his meaning at half a word; and that is the righteousness evangelical. It not only abstains from sins named, and sins implied, but from the beginnings and instruments of sin; and from whatsoever is like it. The Jews were so great haters of swine on pretensions of the Mosaic rites, that they would not so much as name a swine, but called it דבר אחר, *daber acher*, another thing. And thus the Romans,

in their auguries, used *alterum* for *non bonum*. The simile of this St. Paul translates to a Christian duty: 'Let not fornication be so much as named among you, ὡς πρέπον ἐν τοῖς ἁγίοις, as is comely amongst Christians;' that is, come not near a foul thing; speak not of it; let it be wholly banished from all your conversation; for this niceness and curiosity of duty 'becometh saints,' and is an instance of the righteousness evangelical.

I have now done with the first sort of measures of the Christian righteousness: these, which are the matter of our negative duty, these are the measures of our caution and our first innocence. But there are greater things behind, which although I must crowd up into a narrow room, yet I must not wholly omit them: therefore,

4. The fourth thing I shall note to you is, that whereas the righteousness of the Pharisees was but a fragment of the broken tables of Moses; the pursuance of some one grace, *lacinia sanctitatis*, 'a piece of the robe of righteousness;' the righteousness evangelical must be like Christ's seamless coat, all of a piece from the top to the bottom; it must invest the whole soul: Misma, Dumah, Massah, said the proverb of the Rabbins; it is this, and it is the other, and it must be all, it must be a universal righteousness; not a little knot of holy actions scattered in our lives, and drawn into a sum at the day of judgment, but it must be a state of holiness. It was said of the Paphlagonian pigeons, διπλῆν ὁρᾶσθαι τὴν καρδίαν, "every one of them had two hearts;" but that in our mystical theology signifies a wicked man. So said Solomon, 'The perverse or wicked man (derachaim) he is a man of two ways;' ἀνὴρ δίψυχος, so St. James expresses an unbeliever; a man that will and will not; something he does for God, and something for the world; he hath two minds; and in a good fit, in his well days, he is full of repentance, and overflows in piety; but the paroxysm will return in the day of temptation, and then he is gone infallibly. But know this, that in the righteousness evangelical, one duty cannot be exchanged for another, and three virtues will not make amends for one remaining vice. He that oppresses the poor, cannot make amends by giving good counsel; and if a priest be simoniacal, he cannot be esteemed righ-

teous before God by preaching well, and taking care of his charge. To be zealous for God and for religion is good, but that will not legitimate cruelty to our brother. It is not enough for a man to be a good citizen, unless he be also a good man; but some men build their houses with half a dozen cross sticks, and turf is the foundation, and straw is the covering, and they think they dwell securely; their religion is made up of two or three virtues, and they think to commute with God, some good for some bad, πολλὰ μεμιγμένα, πολλὰ δὲ αἰσχρά· as if one deadly wound were not enough to destroy the most healthful constitution in the world. Deceive not yourselves. It is all one on which hand we fall:

——— Unum operantur
Et calor et frigus: sic hoc, sic illud adurit;
Sic tenebræ visum, sic sol contrarius aufert.

The moon may burn us by night as well as the sun by day: and a man may be made blind by the light of the sun as well as by the darkness of the evening, and any one great mischief is enough to destroy one man. Some men are very meek and gentle naturally, and that they serve God withal, they pursue the virtue of their nature: that is, they tie a stone at the bottom of the well, and that is more than needs; the stone will stay there without that trouble; and this good inclination will of itself easily proceed to issue; and, therefore, our care and caution should be more carefully employed in mortification of our natures, and acquist of such virtues to which we are more refractory, and then cherish the other too, even as much as we please: but, at the same time we are busy in this, it may be, we are secret adulterers, and that will spoil our confidences in the goodness of the other instance: others are greatly bountiful to the poor, and love all mankind, and hurt nobody but themselves; but it is a thousand pities to see such loving good natured persons to perish infinitely by one crime, and to see such excellent good things thrown away to please an uncontrolled and a stubborn lust; but so do some escape out of a pit, and are taken in a trap at their going forth; and stepping aside to avoid the hoar-frost, fall into a valley full of snow. The righteousness evangelical is another kind of thing: it is a

holy conversation, a godlike life, a universal obedience, a keeping nothing back from God, a sanctification of the whole man; and keeps not the body only, but the soul and the spirit, unblameable to the coming of the Lord Jesus.

5. And lastly: the pharisaical righteousness was the product of fear, and, therefore, what they must needs do, that they would do; but no more: but the righteousness evangelical is produced by love, it is managed by choice, and cherished by delight and fair experiences. Christians are a willing people; *homines bonæ voluntatis*, 'men of good will;' *arbores Domini:* so they are mystically represented in Scripture; 'the trees of the Lord are full of sap:' among the Hebrews the trees of the Lord did signify such trees as grew of themselves; and all that are of God's planting, are such as have a vital principle within, and grow without constraint. *Πείθονται τοῖς ὡρισμένοις νόμοις, καὶ τοῖς ἰδίοις βιοῖς νικῶσι τοὺς νόμους*, one said it of Christians: "They obey the laws, and by the goodness of their lives exceed the laws:" and certain it is, no man hath the righteousness evangelical, if he resolves always to take all his liberty in every thing that is merely lawful; or if he purpose to do no more than he must needs, that is, no more than he is just commanded. For the reasons are plain.

1. The Christian that resolves to do every thing that is lawful, will many times run into danger and inconvenience; because the utmost extremity of lawful is so near to that which is unlawful, that he will often pass into unlawful undiscernibly. Virtues and vices have not, in all their instances, a great landmark set between them, like warlike nations separate by prodigious walls, vast seas, and portentous hills; but they are oftentimes like the bounds of a parish; men are fain to cut a cross on the turf, and make little marks and annual perambulations for memorials: so it is in lawful and unlawful, by a little mistake a man may be greatly ruined. He that drinks till his tongue is full as a sponge, and his speech a little stammering and tripping, hasty and disorderly, though he be not gone as far as drunkenness, yet he is gone beyond the severity of a Christian; and when he is just past into unlawful, if he disputes too curiously, he will certainly deceive himself for want of a wiser curiosity.

But 2. He that will do all that he thinks he may lawfully, had need have an infallible guide always by him, who should, without error, be able to answer all cases of conscience, which will happen every day in a life so careless and insecure; for if he should be mistaken, his error is his crime, and not his excuse. A man in this case had need be very sure of his proposition; which because he cannot be, in charity to himself, he will quickly find that he is bound to abstain from all things that are uncertainly good, and from all disputable evils, from things which, although they may be in themselves lawful, yet, accidentally, and that from a thousand causes, may become unlawful. *Pavidus quippe et formidolosus est Christianus*, saith Salvian, *atque in tantum peccare metuens, ut interdum et non timenda formidet:* "A Christian is afraid of every little thing; and he sometimes greatly fears that he hath sinned, even then when he hath no other reason to be afraid, but because he would not do so for all the world."

3. He that resolves to use all his liberty, cannot be innocent, so long as there are in the world so many bold temptations, and presumptuous actions, so many scandals, and so much ignorance in the things of God, so many things that are suspicious, and so many things that are of evil report; so many ill customs and disguises in the world, with which if we resolve to comply in all that is supposed lawful, a man may be in the regions of death, before he perceive his head to ache; and, instead of a staff in his hand, may have a splinter in his elbow.

4. Besides all this; he that thus stands on his terms with God, and so carefully husbands his duty, and thinks to make so good a market of obedience, that he will quit nothing which he thinks he may lawfully keep, shall never be exemplary in his life, and shall never grow in grace, and therefore shall never enter into glory. He, therefore, that will be righteous by the measures evangelical, must consider not only what is lawful, but what is expedient; not only what is barely safe, but what is worthy; that which may secure, and that which may do advantage to that concern that is the greatest in the world.

And, the case is very like with them that resolve to do no more good than is commanded them. For, 1. It is infinitely

unprofitable as to our eternal interest, because no man does do all that is commanded at all times; and, therefore, he that will not sometimes do more, besides that he hath no love, no zeal of duty, no holy fires in his soul; besides this, I say, he can never make any amends towards the reparation of his conscience. 'Let him that stole, steal no more;' that is well; but that is not well enough; for he must, if he can, make restitution of what he stole, or he shall never be pardoned; and so it is in all our intercourse with God. To do what is commanded is the duty of the present; we are tied to this in every present, in every period of our lives; but, therefore, if we never do any more than just the present duty, who shall supply the deficiencies, and fill up the gaps, and redeem what is past? This is a material consideration in the righteousness evangelical.

But then, 2. We must know, that in keeping of God's commandments, every degree of internal duty is under the commandments; and, therefore, whatever we do, we must do it as well as we can. Now he that does his duty with the biggest affection he can, will also do all that he can; and he can never know that he hath done what is commanded, unless he does all that is in his power. For God hath put no limit but love and possibility; and therefore whoever says, Hither will I go, and no further; this I will do, and no more; thus much will I serve God, but that shall be all; he hath the affections of a slave, and the religion of a Pharisee, the craft of a merchant, and the falseness of a broker; but he hath not the proper measures of the righteousness evangelical. But so it happens in the mud and slime of the river Borborus, when the eye of the sun hath long dwelt on it, and produces frogs and mice which begin to move a little under a thin cover of its own parental matter, and if they can get loose to live half a life, that is all; but the hinder parts, which are not formed before the setting of the sun, stick fast in their beds of mud, and the little moisty of a creature dies before it could be well said to live: so it is with those Christians, who will do all that they think lawful, and will do no more than what they suppose necessary; they do but peep into the light of the sun of righteousness; they have the beginnings of life; but their hinder parts, their pas-

sions and affections, and the desires of the lower man, are still unformed; and he that dwells in this state, is just so much of a Christian, as a sponge is of a plant, and a mushroom of a shrub: they may be as sensible as an oyster, and discourse at the rate of a child, but are greatly short of the righteousness evangelical.

I have now done with those parts of the Christian righteousness, which were not only a ὑπεροχή, or "excess," but an ἀντιστοιχεῖωσις to the pharisaical: but because I ought not to conceal any thing from you that must integrate our duty, and secure our title to the kingdom of heaven; there is this to be added, that this precept of our blessed Saviour is to be extended to the direct degrees of our duty. We must do more duties, and we must do them better. And in this, although we can have no positive measures, because they are potentially infinite, yet therefore we ought to take the best, because we are sure the greatest is not too big; and we are not sure that God will accept a worse, when we can do a better. Now although this is to be understood of the internal affection only, because that must never be abated, but God is at all times to be loved and served with all our heart; yet concerning the degrees of external duty, as prayers, and alms, and the like, we are certainly tied to a greater excellency in the degree, than was that of the Scribes and Pharisees. I am obliged to speak one word for the determination of this inquiry, namely, to how much more of external duty Christians are obliged, than was in the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisess. In order to this, briefly thus.

I remember that Salvian, speaking of old men summing up their repentances, and making amends for the sins of their whole life, exhorts them to alms and works of piety; but inquiring how much they should do towards the redeeming of their souls, answers with a little sarcasm, but plainly enough to give a wise man an answer; "A man," says he, "is not bound to give away all his goods, unless, peradventure, he owes all to God; but, in that case, I cannot tell what to say; for then the case is altered. A man is not bound to part with all his estate; that is, unless his sins be greater than his estate; but if they be, then he may consider of it again, and consider better. And

he need not part with it all, unless pardon be more precious to him than his money, and unless heaven be worth it all, and unless he knows justly how much less will do it. If he does, let him try his skill, and pay just so much and no more than he owes to God: but if he does not know, let him be sure to do enough." His meaning is this: not that a man is bound to give all he hath, and leave his children beggars; he is bound from that by another obligation. But as when we are tied to pray continually, the meaning is, we should consecrate all our time by taking good portions out of all our time for that duty; the devoutest person being like the waters of Siloam,* a perpetual spring, but not a perpetual current; that is always in readiness, but actually thrusting forth his waters at certain periods every day. So out of all our estate we must take for religion and repentance such portions as the whole estate can allow; so much as will consecrate the rest; so much as is fit to bring when we pray for a great pardon, and deprecate a mighty anger, and turn aside an intolerable fear, and will purchase an excellent peace, and will reconcile a sinner. Now in this case a Christian is to take his measures according to the rate of his contrition and his love, his religion and his fear, his danger and his expectation, and let him measure his amends wisely; his sorrow pouring in, and his fear thrusting it down; and it were very well, if his love also would make it run over. For, deceive not yourselves, there is no other measure but this; so much good as a man does, or so much as he would do, if he could,—so much of religion, and so much of repentance he hath, and no more: and a man cannot ordinarily know that he is in a savable condition, but by the testimony which a divine philanthropy and a good mind always gives, which is to omit no opportunity of doing good in our several proportions and possibilities.

There was an alms which the Scribes and Pharisees were obliged by the law to give, the tenth of every third year's increase; this they always paid, and this sort of alms is called δικαιοσύνη, "righteousness" or "justice;" but the alms which Christians ought to give, is χάρις, and it is ἀγάπη, it is "grace,"

* S. Hier. in Comment. Isai. viii. Isidor. lib. xiii. Orig. cap. 13.

and it is "love," and it is abundance; and so the old rabbins told: *Justitia proprie dicitur in iis quæ jure facimus; benignitas in iis quæ præter jus.* It is more than righteousness, it is bounty and benignity, for that is the Christian measure. And so it is in the other parts and instances of the righteousness evangelical. And therefore it is remarkable that the saints in the Old Testament were called εὐθεῖς, "right men;" and the book of Genesis, as we find it twice attested by St. Jerome, was called by the ancient Hellenists, βίβλος εὐθέων, "the book of right or just men," the book of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.* But the word for Christians is χρηστοὶ, "good" men, harmless, and profitable; men that are good, and men that do good. In pursuance of which it is further observed by learned men, that the word ἀρετὴ, or "virtue," is not in the four gospels; for the actions of Christ's disciples should not be in *gradu virtutis* only, virtuous and laudable; such as these Aristotle presses in his *Magna Moralia:* they must pass on to a further excellency than so: the same which he calls πράξεις τῶν ἡρώων, they must be sometimes, and as often as they can, in *gradu heroico;* or, that I may use the Christian style, they must be "actions of perfection." 'Righteousness' was the συνώνυμον for 'alms' in the Old Testament,—and τελειότης, or 'perfection,' was the word for 'alms' in the New; as appears by comparing the fifth of St. Matthew and the sixth of St. Luke together; and that is the full state of this difference in the inquiries of the righteousness pharisaical and evangelical.

I have many more things to say, but ye cannot hear them now, because the time is past. One thing indeed were fit to be spoken of, if I had any time left; but I can only name it, and desire your consideration to make it up. This great rule that Christ gives us, does also, and that principally too, concern churches and commonwealths, as well as every single Christian. Christian parliaments must exceed the religion and government of the sanhedrim. Your laws must be more holy, the condition of the subjects be made more tolerable, the laws of Christ must be strictly enforced; you must not suffer your great Master to be dishonored, nor his religion dismembered by sects, or dis-

* Comment. in Isai. xii. and lib. vi. in Ezek. xviii.

graced by impiety; you must give no impunity to vicious persons, and you must take care that no great example be greatly corrupted; you must make better provisions for your poor than they did, and take more care even of the external advantages of Christ's religion and his ministers, than they did of the priests and Levites; that is, in all things you must be more zealous to promote the kingdom of Christ, than they were for the ministries of Moses.

The sum of all is this: the righteousness evangelical is the same with that, which the ancients called ἀποστολικὴν διάγειν πολίτειαν, "to live an apostolical life;" that was the measure of Christians; the οἱ ἐναρέτως καὶ θεαρέστως βιοῦντες, "men that desired to please God;" that is, as Apostolius most admirably describes it,* men who are curious of their very eyes, temperate in their tongue, of a mortified body, and a humble spirit, pure in their intentions, masters of their passions; men who, when they are injured, return honorable words: when they are lessened in their estates, increase in their charity; when they are abused, they yet are courteous, and give entreaties; when they are hated, they pay love; men that are dull in contentions, and quick in loving-kindnesses, swift as the feet of Asahel,† and ready as the chariots of Amminadib.‡ True Christians are such as are crucified with Christ, and dead unto all sin, and finally place their whole love on God, and, for his sake, on all mankind: this is the description of a Christian, and the true state of the righteousness evangelical; so that it was well said of Athenagoras, Οὐδεὶς Χριστιανὸς πονηρὸς, εἰ μὴ ὑποκρίνεται τὸν λόγον, "No Christian is a wicked man, unless his life be a continual lie,"§ unless he be false to God and his religion. For the righteousness of the gospel is, in short, nothing else but a transcript of the life of Christ: *De matthana nahaliel; de nahaliel Bamoth*, said R. Joshua; Christ is the

* Ἐστὶ δὲ αὐτὴ ὀφθαλμῶν ἀκρίβεια, γλώσσης ἐγκράτεια, σώματος δουλαγωγία, φρόνημα ταπεινὸν, ἐννοίας καθαρότης, ὀργῆς ἀφανισμός· ἀγγαρεύομενος προτίθει, ἀποστερούμενος μὴ δικάζου, μισούμενος ἀγάπα, βιαζόμενος ἀνέχου, βλασφημούμενος παρακάλει, νεκρώθητι τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, συσταυρώθητι τῷ Χριστῷ, ὅλην τὴν ἀγάπην μετάθες ἐπὶ τὸν Κύριον.

† 2 Sam. ii. 18. ‡ Song of Sol. vi. 12.

§ Legat. pro Christianis.

image of God, and every Christian is the image of Christ, whose example is imitable; but it is the best, and his laws are the most perfect, but the most easy; and the promises by which he invites our greater services, are most excellent, but most true; and the rewards shall be hereafter, but they shall abide for ever; and, that I may take notice of the last words of my text, the threatenings to them that fall short of this righteousness, are most terrible, but most certainly shall come to pass; 'they shall never enter into the kingdom of heaven;' that is, their portion shall be shame and an eternal prison, ἀσφαλτῶδες ῥεῦμα, "a flood of brimstone," and a cohabitation with devils to eternal ages; and if this consideration will not prevail, there is no place left for persuasion, and there is no use of reason, and the greatest hopes and the greatest fears can be no argument or sanction of laws; and the greatest good in the world is not considerable, and the greatest evil is not formidable: but if they be, there is no more to be said; if you would have your portion with Christ, you must be righteous by his measures: and these are they that I have told you.

SUMMARY OF SERMON II.

ROMANS, CHAP. VII.—VERSE 19.

WHAT the eunuch said to Philip, *Of whom speaketh the prophet this, of himself, or some other man?* may be asked concerning the words of the text. Does St. Paul mean this of himself, or of some one else? farther remarks on this topic. The text is one of those hard places of St. Paul, which, as St. Peter says, *the ignorant and unstable wrest to their own destruction:* farther remarks on this point. For the proper stating of this great case of conscience, there must be considered, 1. What are the proper causes, which place men and keep them in this state of a necessity of sinning. 2. The absolute necessity of our coming out of this condition. 3. In what degree this is to be effected. 4. By what instruments it is to be done.

I. With respect to the causes, &c., the first is the evil of our nature; which we may know by experience: this topic dilated on.

1. We have brought ourselves into an accidental necessity of sinning, by the evil principles which are sucked in by the greatest part of mankind. We are taught ways of going to heaven without forsaking our sins; of repentance without restitution; of charity without hearty forgiveness and love; of trusting in Christ's death without conformity to his life, &c.

2. To our weak corrupted nature, and our foolish discourses, men daily add bad habits and customs of sinning. Thus the evil natures, and the evil principles, and the evil manners of

the world, are the causes of our imperfectly willing, and our weaker acting, in the things of God.

II. But what then? Cannot sin be avoided? Cannot a Christian mortify the deeds of the body? Cannot Christ redeem and cleanse us from all our sins? That is the next question.

He that saith he hath not sinned, is a liar: but what then? Because a man hath sinned, it does not follow that he must do so always. *Hast thou sinned? do so no more,* said the wise Bensirach: and so said Christ. The case is indeed confessed, *That all men have sinned,* &c. But is there no remedy for this? Must sin for ever have the upper hand? God forbid. There was a blessed time to come; and, blessed be God, it hath long since come: *Yet a little while, and iniquity shall be taken out of the earth, and righteousness shall reign among you:* for that is in the day of Christ's kingdom, the manifestation of the gospel. When Christ reigns in our heart by his spirit, Dagon and the ark cannot stand together. As in the state of nature no good thing dwells within us; so, when Christ rules in us, no evil thing can abide there: this topic fully enlarged on; whereby it is shown, that as there is a state of carnality, spoken of in the text, in which a man cannot but obey the flesh; so there is a state of spirituality, when sin is dead, and righteousness is alive: and in this state the flesh can no more prevail, than the spirit could in the other: this state still farther enlarged on.

III. In the next place, we are to inquire in what degree this is to be effected: for no man can say that he is totally clean from sin.

In the words of St. Gregory, All man's righteousness will be found to be unrighteous, if God shall severely enter into judgment with us: therefore, even after our innocence, we must pray for pardon: this illustrated. Concerning good men, the question is not, whether or no God could not, in the rigor of

justice, blame their indiscretion, or chide them for a foolish word and a careless action, a fearful heart and trembling faith; these are not the measures by which he judges his children: but the question is, whether any man, that is covetous, or proud, or a drunkard, can at the same time be a child of God? Certainly he cannot. But then we know that God judges us by Jesus Christ; that is, with the allays of mercy, &c. By the measures of the gospel, *he will judge every man according to his works.* What these measures are, is now the question. To which it is answered, first, generally; then more particularly.

In general, thus: a Christian's innocence is always to be measured by the plain lines of the commandments; but is not to be taken into account by uncertain fond opinions, and scruples of zealous or timorous persons. Some men say, that every natural inclination to a forbidden object is a sin: if so, then a man sins whether he resists his inclinations or not; whether he prevails, or not; and there is no other difference but this; he that yields to his desires, sins greatest; and he that never yields, but fights always, sins oftenest: hence the very doing our duty supposes sin: this general topic enlarged on. But God judges of us only by the commandment without, and from the heart and conscience within: he never intended his laws to be a snare to us, &c. So much for the general measure. Consideration of particulars.

1. Every Christian is bound to arrive at such a state, that he have remaining in him no habit of any sin whatever. *Our old man must be crucified,* &c.

2. He that commits any one sin by choice and deliberation, is an enemy to God, and under the dominion of the flesh.

3. Every Christian ought to attain to such a state, as that he never shall sin, even by passion; that is, no passion ought to make him choose a sin.

4. There is one step more, towards which we must greatly

strive; namely, to gain so great a dominion over our sins and lust, that we be not surprised on a sudden: this is indeed a work of time; and it is well if it ever be done; but it must be attempted.

IV. Next consideration, how all this is to be effected.

1. The first great instrument is faith. *Faith overcometh the world:* this topic enlarged on.

2. He that would be free from the slavery of sin, must always watch: nature of this Christian watchfulness explained and illustrated.

3. In the next place, he must be sure, in the mortifications of sin, to leave willingly or carelessly no remains of it, no nest-egg, no principles of it, or affections to it: if any such remain, they will prove to him as manna did to the children of Israel on the second day: it will stink and breed worms.

4. Let us, without further question, put this argument to a material issue: let us do all we can to destroy the whole body of sin; but let us never say we cannot be quit of our sin, before we have done all we can towards the mortification of it.

5. He that would be advanced beyond the power and necessity of sinning, must take great caution respecting his thoughts and secret desires: *for lust, when it is conceived, bringeth forth sin;* but if it be suppressed in the conception, it comes to nothing.

6. Lastly, if sin hath gotten the power of you, consider in what degree it hath prevailed: if only a little, the battle will be more easy, and the victory more certain: but then be sure to do it thoroughly, because there is not much to be done. But if sin hath prevailed greatly, you have much to do: therefore begin betimes, and defer it not till old age shall make the task extremely difficult, or death impossible: this topic enlarged on. To sum up all; every good man is a new creature,

and Christianity is not so much a divine institution, as a divine frame and temper of spirit; which if we pray heartily for, and endeavor to obtain, we shall find it as hard and uneasy to sin against God, as now we think it to abstain from our most pleasing sins. Conclusion.

SERMON II.

THE CHRISTIAN'S CONQUEST OVER THE BODY OF SIN.

ROMANS, CHAP. VII.—VERSE 19.

For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do.

WHAT the eunuch said to Philip, when he read the book of the prophet Isaiah, 'Of whom speaketh the prophet this, of himself, or some other man?' the same question I am to ask concerning the words of my text: Does St. Paul mean this of himself, or of some other? It is hoped that he speaks it of himself; and means, that though his understanding is convinced that he ought to serve God, and that he hath some imperfect desires to do so, yet the law of God without is opposed by a law of sin within. We have a corrupted nature, and a body of infirmity, and our reason dwells in the dark, and we must go out of the world before we leave our sin. For besides that some sins are esteemed brave and honorable, and he is a baffled person that dares not kill his brother like a gentleman; our very tables are made a snare, and our civilities are direct treasons to the soul. You cannot entertain your friend, but excess is the measure; and that you may be very kind to your guest, you step aside, and lay away the Christian; your love cannot be expressed, unless you do him an ill turn, and civilly invite him to a fever. Justice is too often taught to bow to great interests, and men cannot live without flattery; and there are some trades that minister to sin, so that without a sin we cannot

maintain our families; and if you mean to live, you must do as others do. Now so long as men see they are like to be undone by innocence, and that they can no way live but by compliance with the evil customs of the world, men conclude practically, because they must live, they must sin; they must live handsomely, and, therefore, must do some things unhandsomely; and so on the whole matter sin is unavoidable. Fain they would, but cannot tell how to help it. But since it is no better, it is well it is no worse. For it is St. Paul's case, no worse man: he would and he would not, he did and he did not; he was willing, but he was not able; and, therefore, the case is clear, that if a man strives against sin, and falls unwillingly, it shall not be imputed to him; he may be a regenerate man for all that. A man must, indeed, wrangle against sin when it comes, and, like a peevish lover, resist and consent at the same time, and then all is well; for this not only consists with, but is a sign of the state of regeneration.

If this be true, God will be very ill served. If it be not true, most men will have but small hopes of being saved, because this is the condition of most men. What then is to be done? Truth can do us no hurt; and, therefore, be willing to let this matter pass under examination; for if it trouble us now, it will bring comfort hereafter. And, therefore, before I enter into the main inquiry, I shall, by describing the state of the man of whom St. Paul speaks here, tell you plainly, who it is that is in this state of sad things; and then do ye make your resolutions, according as you shall find it necessary for the saving of your souls, which, I am sure, ought to be the end of all preaching.

The man St. Paul speaks of, is one that is 'dead,'* one that was 'deceived' and 'slain,'† one in whom 'sin was exceeding sinful,'‡ that is, highly imputed, greatly malicious, infinitely destructive; he is one who is 'carnal, and sold under sin;'§ he is one that sins against his 'conscience and his reason;'‖ he is one in whom 'sin dwells,' but the Spirit of God does not dwell; for 'no good thing dwells in him;'¶ he is one who is

* Ver. 9. † Ver. 11. ‡ Ver. 13. § Ver. 14.
‖ Ver. 16. ¶ Ver. 18.

'brought into captivity to the law of sin;' he is a servant of uncleanness, with his 'flesh and members serving the law of sin.'* Now if this be a state of regeneration, I wonder what is, or can be, a state of reprobation! for though this be the state of nature, yet it cannot be the state of one redeemed by the Spirit of Christ; and, therefore, flatter not yourselves any more, that it is enough for you to have good desires and bad performances: never think that any sin can reign in you, and yet you be servants of God; that sin can dwell in you, and at the same time the Spirit of God can dwell in you too; or that life and death can abide together. The sum of affairs is this: 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live;'† but not else on any terms whatsoever.

My text is one of the hard places of St. Paul, which, as St. Peter says, 'the ignorant and the unstable wrest to their own damnation.' But because in this case the danger is so imminent, and the deception would be so intolerable, St. Paul, immediately after this chapter, (in which, under his own person, as was usual with him to do, he describes the state of a natural man advanced no farther than Moses's law; and not redeemed by the blood of Christ, or enlightened by the Spirit of God, and taught by the wiser lessons and sermons of the Gospel) immediately spends the next chapter in opposing the evangelical state to the legal, the spiritual to the carnal, the Christian to the natural; and tells us plainly, he that is redeemed by the blood of Christ, is redeemed from the power of sin: he that is Christ's freed-man, is not a slave of sin, not captive to the devil at his will: he that is in 'the flesh, cannot please God,' but every servant of Christ is freed from sin, and is a servant of righteousness, and redeemed from all his vain conversation: for this is the end of Christ's coming, and cannot be in vain, unless we make it so. He came to bless us by turning every one of us from our iniquities. Now concerning this, besides the evidence of the thing itself, that St. Paul does not speak these words of himself, but by a μετασχηματισμὸς, under his own borrowed person he describes the state of a carnal, unre-

* Ver. 25. † Rom. viii. 13.

deemed, unregenerate person, is expressly affirmed by St. Irenæus and Origen, by Tertullian and St. Basil, by Theodoret and St. Chrysostom, by St. Jerome, and sometimes by St. Austin, by St. Ambrose and St. Cyril, by Macarius and Theophylact; and is indeed that true sense and meaning of these words of St. Paul, which words none can abuse or misunderstand, but to the great prejudice of a holy life, and the patronage of all iniquity.

But for the stating of this great case of conscience, I shall first in short describe to you what are the proper causes, which place men and keep them in this state of a necessity of sinning; and, 2. I shall prove the absolute necessity of coming out of this condition, and quitting all our sin. 3. In what degree this is to be effected. 4. By what instruments this is to be done; and all these being practical, will, of themselves, be sufficient use to the doctrines, and need no other applicatory but a plain exhortation.

I. What are the causes of this evil, by which we are first placed, and so long kept, in a necessity of sinning, so that we cannot do what good we would, nor avoid the evil that we hate?

The first is the evil state of our nature. And, indeed, he that considers the daily experiment of his own weak nature, the ignorance and inconstancy of his soul, being like a sick man's legs, or the knees of infants, reeling and unstable by disease or by infirmity, and the perpetual leaven and germinations, the thrustings forth and swelling of his senses, running out like new wine into vapors and intoxicating activities, will readily confess, that though even in nature there may be many good inclinations to many instances of the Divine commandments; yet it can go no farther than this velleity, this desiring to do good, but is not able. And it is on this account that Lactantius brings in the Pagan or natural man complaining, *Volo equidem non peccare, sed vincor; indutus enim sum carne fragili et imbecilla.* This is very true; and I add only this caution: there is not in the corruption of our nature so much as will save us harmless, or make us excusable, if we sin against God. Natural corruption can make us criminal, but not innocent; for though by him that willingly abides in the state of mere

nature, sin cannot be avoided, yet no man is in that state longer than he loves to be so; for the grace of God came to rescue us from this evil portion, and is always present, to give us a new nature, and create us over again: and, therefore, though sin is made necessary to the natural man by his impotency and fond loves, that is by his unregenerate nature; yet, in the whole constitution of affairs, God hath more than made it up by his grace, if we will make use of it. *In pueris elucet spes plurimorum, quæ dum emoritur ætate, manifestum est, non naturam defecisse, sed curam*, said Quintilian.* We cannot tell what we are, or what we think, in our infancy; and when we can know our thoughts, we can easily observe that we have learned evil things by evil examples, and the corrupt manners of an evil conversation: *Et ubi per socordiam vires, tempus, ingenium defluxere, naturæ infirmitas accusatur;*† that, indeed, is too true: "We grow lazy, and wanton, and we lose our time, and abuse our parts, and do ugly things, and lay the fault wholly on our natural infirmities:" but we must remember, that, by this time, it is a state of nature, a state of flesh and blood, which cannot enter into heaven. The natural man and the natural child are not the same thing in true divinity. The natural child indeed can do no good; but the natural man cannot choose but do evil; but it is because he will do so; he is not born in the second birth, and renewed in the baptism of the Spirit.

1. We have brought ourselves into an accidental necessity of sinning, by the evil principles which are sucked in by great parts of mankind. We are taught ways of going to heaven without forsaking our sins; of repentance without restitution; of being in charity without hearty forgiveness, and without love; of believing our sins to be pardoned before they are mortified; of trusting in Christ's death without conformity to his life; of being in God's favor on the only account of being of such an opinion; and that when we are once in, we can never be out. We are taught to believe that the events of things do not depend on our crucifying our evil and corrupt affections, but on eternal and unalterable counsels; that the promises are

* Gesner, i. 1, 2. † Sallust. Bell. Jug. c. i.

not the rewards of obedience, but graces pertaining only to a few predestinates, and yet men are saints for all that; and that the laws of God are of the race of the giants, not to be observed by any grace or by any industry: this is the catechism of the ignorant and the profane: but, without all peradventure, the contrary propositions are the way to make the world better: but certainly they that believe these things, do not believe it necessary that we should eschew all evil: and no wonder then, if when men on these accounts slacken their industry and their care, they find sin still prevailing, still dwelling within them, and still unconquerable by so slight and disheartened labors. For ἰδιώτης πᾶς καὶ ἀπαίδευτος τρόπον τινὰ παῖς ἐστι· "Every fool and every ignorant person is a child still:" and it is no wonder, that he who talks foolishly, should do childishly and weakly.

2. To our weak and corrupted nature, and our foolish discourses, men do daily superinduce evil habits and customs of sinning. *Consuetudo mala tanquam hamus infixus animæ*, said the father; "An evil custom is a hook in the soul," and draws it whither the devil pleases. When it comes to the καρδία γεγυμνασμένη πλεονεξίαις, as St. Peter's word is, 'a heart exercised with covetous practices,' then it is also ἀσθενής, it is 'weak,' and unable to do the good it fain would, or to avoid the evil, which, in a good fit, it pretends to hate. This is so known, I shall not insist on it; but add this only; that wherever a habit is contracted, it is all one what the instance be; it is as easy as delicious, as unalterable in virtue as in vice; for what helps nature brings to a vicious habit, the same and much more the Spirit of God, by his power and by his comforts, can do in a virtuous; and then we are well again. You see by this who are, and why they are, in this evil condition. The evil natures, and the evil principles, and the evil manners of the world, these are the causes of our imperfect willings and weaker actings in the things of God; and as long as men stay here, sin will be unavoidable. For even meat itself is loathsome to a sick stomach; and it is impossible for him that is heart-sick, to eat the most wholesome diet; and yet he that shall say eating is impossible, will be best confuted by seeing all the healthful men in the world eat heartily every day.

II. But what then? Cannot sin be avoided? Cannot a Christian mortify the deeds of the body? Cannot Christ redeem us, and cleanse us from all our sins? Cannot the works of the devil be destroyed? That is the next particular to be inquired of: Whether or no it be not necessary, and therefore, very possible, for a servant of God to pass from this evil state of things, and not only hate evil, but avoid it also?

'He that saith he hath not sinned, is a liar;' but what then? Because a man hath sinned, it does not follow he must do so always. "Hast thou sinned? do so no more," said the wise Bensirach; and so said Christ to the poor paralytic, 'Go, and sin no more.'—They were excellent words spoken by a holy prophet: 'Let not the sinner say he hath not sinned; for God shall burn coals of fire on his head, that saith before the Lord God and his glory, I have not sinned.' Well! that case is confessed; 'All men have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.' But is there no remedy for this? Must it always be so? and must sin for ever have the upper hand, and for ever baffle our resolutions, and all our fierce and earnest promises of amendment? God forbid. There was a time then, to come, and, blessed be God, it hath been long come: 'Yet a little while,' saith the prophet, 'and iniquity shall be taken out of the earth, and righteousness shall reign among you.' For that is in the day of Christ's kingdom, the manifestation of the gospel. When Christ reigns in our hearts by his Spirit, Dagon and the ark cannot stand together; we cannot serve Christ and Belial. And as in the state of nature no good thing dwells within us; so, when Christ rules in us, no evil thing can abide; 'For every plant that my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up,' and cast away into the fires of consumption or purification. But how shall this come to pass, since we all find ourselves so infinitely weak and foolish? I shall tell you. 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven,' saith Christ. It is impossible to nature; it is impossible to them that are given to vanity; it is impossible for them that delight in the evil snare: but Christ adds, 'With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.' What we cannot do for ourselves, God can do for us and with us. What nature cannot

do, the grace of God can. So that the thing may be done; not indeed by ourselves, but *gratia Dei mecum*, saith St. Paul; God and man together can do it. But if it can be done any way that God has put into our powers, the consequent is this; no man's good will shall be taken in exchange for the real and actual mortification of his sins. He that sins, and would fain not sin, but sin is present with him whether he will or no, let him take heed; for the same is 'the law of sin,' and 'the law of death,' saith the Apostle; and that man's heart is not right with God. For it is impossible men should pray for deliverance, and not be heard; that they should labor, and not be prosperous; unless they pray amiss, and labor falsely. Let no man, therefore, please himself with talking of great things, with perpetual conversation in pious discourses, or with ineffective desires of serving God: he that does not practise as well as he talks, and do what he desires, and what he ought to do, confesses himself to sin greatly against his conscience; and it is a prodigious folly to think that he is a good man, because, though he does sin, yet it was against his mind to do so. A man's conscience can never condemn him, if that be his excuse, to say that his conscience checked him; and that will be but a sad apology at the day of judgment. Some men talk like angels, and pray with great fervor, and meditate with deep recesses, and speak to God with loving affections, and words of union, and adhere to him in silent devotion, and when they go abroad are as passionate as ever, peevish as a frighted fly, vexing themselves with their own reflections: they are cruel in their bargains, unmerciful to their tenants, and proud as a barbarian prince; they are, for all their fine words, impatient of reproof, scornful to their neighbors, lovers of money, supreme in their own thoughts, and submit to none: all their spiritual life they talk of is nothing but spiritual fancy and illusion: they are still under the power of their passions, and their sin rules them imperiously, and carries them away infallibly. Let these men consider, there are some men think it impossible to do as much as they do: the common swearer cannot leave that vice, and talk well; and these men that talk thus well, think they cannot do as well as they talk: but both of them are equally under the power of their respective sins, and are equally deceived, and

equally not the servants of God. This is true: but it is equally as true that there is no necessity for all this; for it ought, and it may be otherwise if we please: for, I pray, be pleased to hear St. Paul; 'Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh;' there is your remedy: 'for the Spirit lusteth against the flesh, and the flesh against the Spirit;' there is the cause of it; ἵνα μὴ ποιῆτε, 'so that ye may not, or cannot do the things ye would;'* that is the blessed consequent and product of that cause. That is plainly,—As there is a state of carnality, of which St. Paul speaks in my text, so that in that state a man cannot but obey the flesh,—so there is also a state of spirituality, when sin is dead, and righteousness is alive; and in this state the flesh can no more prevail, than the Spirit could do in the other. Some men cannot choose but sin; 'for the carnal mind is not subject to God, neither indeed can be,'† saith St. Paul; but there are also some men that cannot endure any thing that is not good. It is a great pain for a temperate man to suffer the disorders of drunkenness, and the shames of lust are intolerable to a chaste and modest person. This also is affirmed by St. John: 'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him.'‡ So that, you see, it is possible for a good man not to commit the sin to which he is tempted. But the Apostle says more: 'He doth not commit sin, neither indeed can he, because he is born of God.'

And this is agreeable to the words of our blessed Saviour: 'A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit, and a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit;'§ that is, as the child of hell is carried to sin, *pleno impetu*, he does not check at it, he does it, and is not troubled; so, on the other side, a child of God is as fully convinced of righteousness; and that which is unrighteous is as hateful to him as colocynths to the taste, or the sharpest punctures to the pupil of the eye. We may see something of this in common experiences. What man of ordinary prudence and reputation can be tempted to steal? or, for what price would he be tempted to murder his friend? If we did hate all sins as we hate these, would it not be as easy to be as innocent

* Gal. v. 16. † Rom. viii. 7. ‡ 1 John, iii. 9.
§ Matt. vii. 18.

in other instances, as most men are in these? and we should have as few drunkards as we have thieves. In such as these, we do not complain, in the words of my text, 'What I would not, that I do; and what I would, I do not.' Does not every good man overcome all the power of great sins? and can he, by the Spirit of God and right reason, by fear and hope, conquer Goliath, and beat the sons of the giant; and can he not overcome the little children of Gath? or is it harder to overcome a little sin than a great one? Are not the temptations to little sins very little? and yet are they greater and stronger than a mighty grace? Could the poor demoniac, that lived in the graves, by the power of the devil break his iron chains in pieces? and cannot he, who hath the Spirit of God, dissolve the chains of sin? 'Through Christ that strengthens me, I can do all things,' saith St. Paul; *Satis sibi cepiarum cum Publio Decio, et nunquam nimium hostium fore*, said one in Livy; which is best rendered by St. Paul—'If God be with us, who can be against us?' Nay, there is ἀ *ὑπερνικῶμεν* in St. Paul, 'We are more than conquerors.' For even amongst an army of conquerors there are degrees of exaltation: some serve God like the centurion, and some like St. Peter; some like Martha, and some like Mary, *μετ' εὐκολίας ἀνάσης, ἄνευ πόνων καὶ ἱδρώτων*' all good men conquer their temptation, but some with more ease, and some with a clearer victory; and more than this,—*Non solum viperam terimus, sed ex ea antidotum conficimus*, "We kill the viper, and make treacle of him;" that is, not only escape from, but get advantages by, temptations. But we, commonly, are more afraid than hurt: 'Let us, therefore, lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us:'* so we read the words of the Apostle; but St. Chrysostom's rendition of them is better; for the word *εὐπερίστατος* is a perfect passive, and cannot signify the strength and irresistibility of sin on us, but quite the contrary, *εὐπερίστατος ἁμαρτία* signifies 'the sin that is so easily avoided,' as they that understand that language know very well. And if we were so wise and valiant as not to affright ourselves with our own terrors, we should quickly find, that by the help of the Spirit of God, we can do

* Heb. xii. 1.

no more than we thought we could. It was said of Alexander, *Bene ausus est vana contemnere*,* he did no great matter in conquering the Persians, because they were a pitiful and a soft people; only he understood them to be so, and was wise and bold enough not to fear such images and men of clouts. But men, in the matter of great sins and little, do as the magicians of Egypt: when Moses turned his rod into a serpent, it moved them not; but when they saw the lice and the flies, then they were afraid. We see, that, by the grace of God, we can escape great sins; but we start at flies, and a bird out of a bush disorders us; the lion in the way troubles us not, but a frog and a worm affright us. Remember the saying of St. Paul, 'Christ came to redeem to himself a church, and to present it, pure and spotless, before the throne of grace;' and if you mean to be of this number, you must endeavor to be under this qualification, that is, as Paul labored to be, 'void of offence, both towards God and towards man.' And so I have done with the second proposition. It is necessary that all sin, great and little, should be mortified and dead in us, and that we no longer abide in that state of slavery, as to say, 'The good that I would, I do not; but the evil that I would not, that I do.'

III. In the next place, we are to inquire in what degree this is to be effected; for though in negatives, properly, there are no degrees, yet, unless there be some allays in this doctrine, it will not be so well, and it may be, your experiences will for ever confute my arguments; for, 'Who can say that he is clean from his sin?' said the wise man. And, as our blessed Saviour said, 'He that is innocent among you all, let him throw the first stone at the sinner,' and spare not.

To this I answer, in the words of St. Gregory, All man's righteousness will be found to be unrighteous, if God should severely enter into judgment; but, therefore, even after our innocence we must pray for pardon, *ut quæ succumbere discussa poterat, ex judicis pietate convalescat*, "that our innocence, which, in strictness of divine judgment, would be found spotted and stained, by the mercy of our Saviour may be accepted." St. Bernard expresses this well: *Nostra siqua est*

* Liv. ix. 17.

humilis justitia, recta forsitan, sed non pura; "Our humble righteousness is, perhaps, right in the eyes of God, but not pure;" that is, accepted by his mercy, but it is such as dares not contend in judgment. For as no man is so much a sinner, but he sometimes speaks a good word, or does some things not ill, and yet that little good interrupts not that state of evil; so it is amongst very good men, from whom, sometimes, may pass something that is not commendable; and yet their heart is so habitually right towards God, that they will do nothing, I do not say which God, in justice, cannot, but which in mercy, he will not, impute to eternal condemnation. It was the case of David; 'he was a man after God's own heart;' nay, it is said, 'he was blameless, save in the matter of Uriah;' and yet we know he numbered the people, and God was angry with him, and punished him for it; but, because he was a good man, and served God heartily, that other fault of his was imputed to him no further. God set a fine on his head for it; but it was *salvo contenemento*, "the main stake was safe."

For concerning good men, the question is not, whether or no God could not, in the rigor of justice, blame their indiscretion, or impute a foolish word, or chide them for a hasty answer, or a careless action, for a less devout prayer, or weak hands, for a fearful heart, or a trembling faith. These are not the measures by which God judges his children; 'for he knoweth whereof we are made, and he remembers that we are but dust.' But the question is, whether any man that is covetous, or proud, false to his trust, or a drunkard, can, at the same time, be a child of God? No, certainly he cannot. But then we know that God judges us by Jesus Christ, that is, with the allays of mercy, with an eye of pardon, with the sentences of a father, by the measures of a man, and by analogy to all our unavoidable abatements. God could enter with us into a more severe judgment, but he would not; and no justice tied him from exercising that mercy. But, according to the measures of the gospel, 'he will judge every man according to his works.' Now what these measures are, is now the question. To which I answer, first, in general, and then more particularly.

In general, thus:—A Christian's innocence is always to be measured by the plain lines and measures of the command-

ments; but is not to be taken into account by uncertain and fond opinions, and the scruples of zealous and timorous persons. My meaning is this: some men tell us that every natural inclination to a forbidden object is a sin; which they that believe, finding them to be natural, do also confess that such sins are unavoidable. But if these natural and first motions be sins, then a man sins whether he resists them or resists them not, whether he prevails or prevails not; and there is no other difference but this,—he that fights not against, but always yields to his desires, sins greatest; and he that never yields, but fights always, sins oftenest. But then, by this reckoning, it will indeed be impossible to avoid millions of sins; because the very doing of our duty supposes a sin. If God should impute such first desires to us as sins, we were all very miserable; but if he does not impute them, let us trouble ourselves no further about them, but to take care that they never prevail on us. Thus men are taught, that they never say their prayers but they commit a sin. Indeed that is true but too often; but yet it is possible for us, by the grace of God, to please him in saying our prayers, and to be accepted of him. But, indeed, if God did proceed against us as we do against one another, no man could abide innocent for so much as one hour. But God's judgment is otherwise; he inquires if the heart be right, if our labor be true, if we love no sin, if we use prudent and efficacious instruments to mortify our sin, if we go about our religion as we go about the biggest concerns of our life, if we be sincere and real in our actions and intentions. For this is the ἀναμαρτησία that God requires of us all; this is that 'sinless state,' in which if God does not find us, we shall never see his glorious face; and if he does find us, we shall certainly be saved by the blood of Jesus. For, in the style of Scripture, to be εἰλικρινεῖς καὶ ἀπρόσκοποι is the same thing; 'to be sincere, and to be without offence,' is all one. Thus David spake heartily, 'I am utterly purposed that my mouth shall not offend; and thou shalt find no wickedness in me.' He that endeavors this, and hopes this, and does actions and uses means accordingly, not being deceived by his own false heart, nor abused by evil propositions,—this man will stand upright in the congregations of the just; and, though he cannot chal-

lenge heaven by merit, yet he shall receive it as a gift, by promise and by grace. *Lex nos innocentes esse jubet, non curiosos*, said Seneca. For God takes no judgment of us by any measures, but of the commandment without, and the heart and the conscience within; but he never intended his laws to be a snare to us, or to entrap us with consequences and dark interpretations, by large deductions and witty similitudes of faults; but he requires of us a sincere heart, and a hearty labor in the work of his commandments; he calls on us to avoid all that which his law plainly forbids, and which our consciences do condemn. This is the general measure. The particulars are briefly these:—

1. Every Christian is bound to arrive at that state, that he have remaining in him no habit of any sin whatsoever. 'Our old man must be crucified,'—'the body of sin must be destroyed,'—'he must no longer serve sin,'—'sin shall not have the dominion over you.'—All these are the apostle's words; that is plainly, as I have already declared, you must not be at that pass, that though ye would avoid sin, ye cannot: for he that is so, is a most perfect slave, and Christ's freedman cannot be so. Nay, he that loves sin, and delights in it, hath no liberty indeed; but he hath more show of it, than he that obeys it against his will.

> ——— Libertatis servaveris umbram,
> Si quidquid jubeare velis.—Lucan.

He that loves to be in the place, is a less prisoner than he that is confined against his will.

2. He that commits any one sin by choice and deliberation, is an enemy to God, and is under the dominion of the flesh. In the case of deliberate sins, one act does give the denomination; he is an adulterer, that so much as once foully breaks the holy laws of marriage. 'He that offends in one, is guilty of all,' saith St. James. St. Peter's denial, and David's adultery, had passed on to a fatal issue, if the mercy of God, and a great repentance, had not interceded. But they did so no more, and so God restored them to grace and pardon. And in this sense are the words of St. John, 'Ο ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, '*He that does a sin*, is of the devil,' and 'he that is born of

God,' ἁμαρτίαν οὐ ποιεῖ, *does not commit a sin*;* he chooses none, he loves none, he endures none, *talia quæ non faciet bonæ fidei et spei Christianus*; they do no great sin, and love no little one. A sin chosen and deliberately done, is, as Tertullian's expression is, *crimen devoratorium salutis*; "it devours salvation." For as there are some sins, which can be done but once, as a man can kill his father but once, or himself but once, so in those things which can be repeated, a perfect choice is equivalent to a habit; it is the same in principle, that a habit is in the product. In short, he is not a child of God, that, knowingly and deliberately, chooses any thing that God hates.

3. Every Christian ought to attain such a state of life, as that he never sin, not only by a long deliberation, but also not by passion. I do not say that he is not a good Christian, who by passion is suddenly surprised, and falls into folly; but this I say, that no passion ought to make him choose a sin. For, let the sin enter by anger or by desire, it is all one, if the consent be gained. It is an ill sign, if a man, though on the sudden, consents to a base action. Thus far every good man is tied, not only to endeavor, but to prevail against his sin.

4. There is one step more, which, if it be not actually effected, it must, at least, be greatly endeavored, and the event be left to God; and that is, that we strive for so great a dominion over our sins and lust, as that we be not surprised on a sudden. This, indeed, is a work of time, and it is well if it be ever done; but it must always be endeavored. But in this particular, even good men are sometimes unprosperous. St. Epiphanius and St. Chrysostom grew once into choler, and they passed too far, and lost more than their argument; they lost their reason, and they lost their patience; and Epiphanius wished that St. Chrysostom might not die a bishop; and he, in a peevish exchange, wished that Epiphanius might never return to his bishoprick: when they had forgotten their foolish anger, God remembered it, and said Amen to both their cursed speakings. Nay, there is yet a greater example of human frailty: St. Paul and Barnabas were very holy persons; but once, in a heat, they were both to blame; they were peevish,

* 1 John, iii. 8.

and parted company. This was not very much; but God was so displeased, even for this little fly in their box of ointment, that their story says they never saw one another's face again. These earnest emissions and transportations of passion do some time declare the weakness of good men; but that, even here, we ought, at least, to endeavor to be more than conquerors, appears in this,—because God allows it not, and by punishing such follies, does manifest that he intends that we should get victory over our sudden passions, as well as our natural lusts. And so I have done with the third inquiry, in what degree God expects our innocence; and now I briefly come to the last particular, which will make all the rest practicable.

IV. I am now to tell you how all this can be effected, and how we shall get free from the power and dominion of our sins.

1. The first great instrument is faith. He that hath faith like a grain of mustard-seed can remove mountains; the mountains of sin shall fall flat at the feet of the faithful man, and shall be removed into the sea, the sea of Christ's blood, and penitential waters. 'Faith overcometh the world,' saith St. John; and 'walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.' There are two of our enemies gone,—the world and the flesh, by faith and the Spirit, by the spirit of faith; and, as for the devil, put on the shield of faith, and 'resist the devil, and he will flee from you,' saith the Apostle; and the powers of sin seem insuperable to none, but to them that have not faith: we do not believe that God intends we should do what he seems to require of us; or else we think, that though God's grace abounds, yet sin must superabound, expressly against the saying of St. Paul; or else we think that the evil spirit is stronger than the good Spirit of God. Hear what St. John saith: 'My little children, ye are of God, and have overcome the evil one; for the Spirit that is in you is greater than that which is in the world.'* Believest thou this? If you do, I shall tell you what may be the event of it. When the father of the boy possessed with the devil told his sad story to Christ, he said, 'Master, if thou canst do any thing, I pray help me.' Christ answered him, 'If thou canst believe, all things

* 1 John, iv. 4.

are possible to him that believeth.'* N.B. And therefore, if you do believe this, go to your prayers, and go to your guards, and go to your labor, and try what God will do for you. 'For whatsoever things ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye shall receive them, and ye shall have them.' Now consider; do not we every day pray, in the divine hymn called *Te Deum*, "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin?" And in the Collect at morning prayer, "and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger; but that all our doings may be ordered by thy governance, to do always that which is righteous in thy sight?" Have you any hope, or any faith, when you say that prayer? And if you do your duty as you can, do you think the failure will be on God's part? Fear not that, if you can trust in God, and do accordingly; 'though your sins were as scarlet, yet they shall be as white as snow,' and pure as the feet of the holy Lamb. Only let us forsake all those weak propositions, which cut the nerves of faith, and make it impossible for us to actuate all our good desires, or to come out from the power of sin.

2. He that would be free from the slavery of sin, and the necessity of sinning, must always watch. Aye, that is the point; but who can watch always? Why, every good man can watch always; and, that we may not be deceived in this, let us know, that the running away from a temptation is a part of our watchfulness; and every good employment is another great part of it, and a laying in provisions of reason and religion beforehand is yet a third part of this watchfulness; and the conversation of a Christian is a perpetual watchfulness; not a continual thinking of that one, or those many things, which may endanger us; but it is a continual doing something, directly or indirectly, against sin. He either prays to God for his Spirit, or relies on the promises, or receives the sacrament, or goes to his bishop for counsel and a blessing, or to his priest for religious offices, or places himself at the feet of good men to hear their wise sayings, or calls for the church's prayers, or does the duty of his calling, or actually resists temptation, or frequently renews his holy purposes, or fortifies him-

* Mark ix. 23.

self by vows, or searches into his danger by a daily examination; so that, in the whole, he is for ever on his guards. This duty and caution of a Christian is like watching, lest a man cut his finger. Wise men do not often cut their fingers, yet every day they use a knife; and a man's eye is a tender thing, and every thing can do it wrong, and every thing can put it out; yet, because we love our eyes so well, in the midst of so many dangers, by God's providence, and a prudent natural care, by winking when any thing comes against them, and by turning aside when a blow is offered, they are preserved so certainly, that not one man in ten thousand does, by a stroke, lose one of his eyes in all his lifetime. If we would transplant our natural care to a spiritual caution, we might, by God's grace, be kept from losing our souls, as we are from losing our eyes; and, because a perpetual watchfulness is our great defence, and the perpetual presence of God's grace is our great security, and that this grace never leaves us, unless we leave it, and the precept of a daily watchfulness is a thing not only so reasonable, but so many easy ways to be performed,—we see on what terms we may be quit of our sins, and more than conquerors over all the enemies and impediments of salvation.

3. If you would be in the state of the liberty of the sons of God, that is, that you may not be servants of sin in any instance, be sure, in the mortification of sin, willingly or carelessly to leave no remains of it, no nest-egg, no principles of it, no affections to it; if any thing remains, it will prove to us as manna to the sons of Israel on the second day; it will breed worms, and stink. Therefore, labor against every part of it, reject every proposition that gives it countenance, pray to God against it all. And what then? Why then, 'ask, and you shall have,' said Christ. Nay, say some, it is true, you shall be heard, but in part only; for God will leave some remains of sin within us, lest we should become proud, by being innocent. So vainly do men argue against God's goodness, and their own blessings and salvation; *μετὰ πλείονος τέχνης, καὶ παρασκευῆς, καὶ πραγματείας ἀπόλλυνται*, as St. Basil says; "they contrive witty arts to undo themselves," being entangled in the periods of ignorant disputations. But as to the thing itself, if, by the remains of sin, they mean the propensities and natural incli-

nations to forbidden objects, there is no question but they will remain in us, so long as we bear our flesh about us; and, surely, that is a great argument to make us humble. But these are not the sins which God charges on his people. But if, by remains, we mean any part of the habit of sin, any affection, any malice or perverseness of the will, then it is a contradiction to say that God leaves in us such remains of sin, lest, by innocence, we become proud; for how should pride spring in a man's heart, if there be no remains of sin left? And is it not the best, the surest way, to cure the pride of our hearts, by taking out every root of bitterness, even the root of pride itself? Will a physician purposely leave the relics of a disease, and pretend he does it to prevent a relapse? And is it not more likely he will relapse, if the sickness be not wholly cured? But besides this, if God leaves any remains of sin in us, what remains are they, and of what sins? Does he leave the remains of pride? If so, that were a strange cure, to leave the remains of pride in us, to keep us from being proud. But, if not so, but that all the remains of pride be taken away by the grace of God blessing our endeavors, what danger is there of being proud, the remains of which sin are, by the grace of God, wholly taken away? But then, if the pride of the heart be cured, which is the hardest to be removed, and commonly is done last of all,—who can distrust the power of the Spirit of God, or his goodness, or his promises, and say that God does not intend to cleanse his sons and servants from all unrighteousness; and, according to St. Paul's prayer, 'keep their bodies, and souls, and spirits unblameable to the coming of the Lord Jesus?' But, however, let God leave what remains he please, all will be well enough on that side; but let us be careful, as far as we can, that we leave none; lest it be severely imputed to us, and the fire break out and consume us.

4. Let us, without any farther question, put this argument to a material issue; let us do all that we can do towards the destruction of the whole body of sin; but let us never say we cannot be quit of our sin, till we have done all that we can do towards the mortification of it; for till that be done, how can any man tell where the fault lies, or whether it can be done or no? If any man can say that he hath done all that he

could do, and yet hath failed of his duty,—if he can say truly that he hath endured as much as is possible to be endured,—that he hath watched always, and never nodded, when he could avoid it,—that he hath loved as much as he could love,—that he hath waited till he can wait no longer;—then, indeed, if he says true, we must confess that it is not to be understood. But is there any man in the world that does all that he can do? If there be, that man is blameless; if there be not, then he cannot say but it is his own fault that his sin prevails against him. It is true, that no man is free from sin; but it is as true, that no man does as much as he can against it; and, therefore, no man must go about to excuse himself by saying, No man is free from his sin; and therefore, no man can be, no, not by the powers of grace: for he may as well argue thus,—No man does do all that he can do against it, and, therefore, it is impossible he should do what he can do. The argument is apparently foolish, and the excuse is weak, and the deception visible, and sin prevails on our weak arguings; but the consequence is plainly this,—when any man commits a sin, he is guilty before God, and he cannot say he could not help it; and God is just in punishing every sin, and very merciful when he forgives us any. But he that says he cannot avoid it, that he cannot overcome his lust,—confesses himself a servant of sin, and that he is not yet redeemed by the blood of the holy Lamb.

5. He that would be advanced beyond the power and necessity of sinning, must take great caution concerning his thoughts and secret desires; 'for lust, when it is conceived, bringeth forth sin;' but, if it be suppressed in the conception, it comes to nothing; but we find it hard to destroy the serpent when the egg is hatched into a cockatrice. The thought is ἀμάρτυρος ἁμαρτία; no man takes notice of it, but lets it alone till the sin be too strong;* and then we complain we cannot help it. *Nolo sinas cogitationem crescere,* "Suffer not your thoughts to grow up;" for they usually come ἄφνω, εὐκόπως, ἀπραγματεύτως, as St. Basil says, "suddenly, and easily, and without

* Ille laudatur, qui, ut cœperint, statim interficit cogitata, et allidit ad petram.

business;" but take heed that you nurse them not; but, if you chance to stumble, mend your pace; and if you nod, let it awaken you; for he only can be a good man that raises himself up at the first trip, that strangles his sin in the birth: Τοιαῦται τῶν ἁγίων ψυχαὶ, πρὶν ἔπεσον, ἀνίστανται, "Good men rise up again, even before they fall," saith St. Chrysostom. Now, I pray, consider that when sin is but in the thought, it is easily suppressed, and, if it be stopped there, it can go no farther; and what great mountain of labor is it, then, to abstain from our sin? Is not the adultery of the eye easily cured by shutting the eye-lid? and cannot the thoughts of the heart be turned aside by doing business, by going into company, by reading, or by sleeping? A man may divert his thoughts by shaking of his head, by thinking any thing else, by thinking nothing. *Da mihi Christianum*, saith St. Austin, *et intelligit quod dico.* Every man that loves God understands this, and more than this, to be true. Now if things be thus, and that we may be safe in that which is supposed to be the hardest of all, we must needs condemn ourselves, and lay our faces in the dust, when we give up ourselves to any sin; we cannot be justified by saying we could not help it. For as it was decreed by the fathers of the second Aurasican council, *Hoc etiam secundum fidem catholicam credimus*, &c. "This we believe according to the catholic faith;" all that have received baptismal grace; all that are baptised by the aid and co-operation of Christ, must and can, if they will labor faithfully, perform and fulfil those things which belong unto salvation.

6. And lastly: if sin hath gotten the power of any one of us, consider in what degree the sin hath prevailed: if but a little, the battle will be more easy, and the victory more certain; but then be sure to do it thoroughly, because there is not much to be done: but if sin hath prevailed greatly, then indeed you have very much to do; therefore begin betimes, and defer not this work till old age shall make it extremely difficult, or death shall make it impossible.

> Nam quamvis prope te, quamvis temone sub uno
> Vertentem sese, frustra sectabere canthum,
> Cum rota posterior curras, et in axe secundo.*

* Pers. v. 70.

If thou beest cast behind; if thou hast neglected the duties of thy vigorous age, thou shalt never overtake that strength; "the hinder wheel, though bigger than the former, and measures more ground at every revolution, yet shall never overtake it;" and all the second counsels of thy old age, though undertaken with greater resolution, and acted with the strengths of fear and need, and pursued with more pertinacious purposes than the early repentances of young men, yet shall never overtake those advantages which you lost when you gave your youth to folly, and the causes of a sad repentance.

However, if you find it so hard a thing to get from the power of one master-sin; if an old adulterer does dote,—if an old drunkard be further from remedy than a young sinner,—if covetousness grows with old age,—if ambition be still more hydropic and grows more thirsty for every draught of honor,—you may easily resolve that old age, or your last sickness, is not so likely to be prosperous in the mortification of your long prevailing sins. Do not all men desire to end their days in religion, to die in the arms of the church, to expire under the conduct of a religious man? When ye are sick or dying, then nothing but prayers and sad complaints, and the groans of tremulous repentance, and the faint labors of an almost impossible mortification: then the despised priest is sent for; then he is a good man, and his words are oracles, and religion is truth, and sin is a load, and the sinner is a fool; then we watch for a word of comfort from his mouth, as the fearful prisoner for his fate from the judge's answer. That which is true then, is true now; and, therefore, to prevent so intolerable a danger, mortify your sin betime, for else you will hardly mortify it at all. Remember that the snail outwent the eagle, and won the goal, because she set out betimes.

To sum up all: every good man is a new creature, and Christianity is not so much a divine institution, as a divine frame and temper of spirit,—which if we heartily pray for, and endeavor to obtain, we shall find it as hard and as uneasy to sin against God, as now we think it impossible to abstain from our most pleasing sins. For as it is in the spermatic virtue of the heavens, which diffuses itself universally on all sublunary bodies, and subtilely insinuating itself into the most dull and inactive element, produces gold and pearls, life and motion,

and brisk activities in all things, that can receive the influence and heavenly blessing;—so it is in the Holy Spirit of God, and the word of God, and the grace of God, which St. John calls 'the seed of God;' it is a law of righteousness, and it is a law of the Spirit of life, and changes nature into grace, and dulness into zeal, and fear into love, and sinful habits into innocence, and passes on from grace to grace, till we arrive at the full measures of the stature of Christ, and into the perfect liberty of the sons of God; so that we shall no more say, The evil that I would not, that I do;—but we shall hate what God hates; and the evil that is forbidden, we shall not do; not because we are strong of ourselves, but because Christ is our strength, and he is in us; and Christ's strength shall be perfected in our weakness, and his grace will be sufficient for us; and he will of his own good pleasure work in us, not only to will, but also to do, *velle et perficere*, saith the Apostle, 'to will and to do it thoroughly' and fully, being sanctified throughout, to the glory of his holy name, and the eternal salvation of our souls, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom, with the Father, &c.

SUMMARY OF SERMON III.

JAMES, CHAP. II.—VERSE 24.

THAT we are *justified by faith*, St. Paul tells us: that we are also *justified by works*, we are told by St. James in the text; and both may be true: observations on this point. Purport of this discourse explained. The two Apostles spake by the same spirit, and to the same great design; though with differing intermedial purposes. Some preliminary observations necessary on this important subject.

1. That no man may abuse himself or others by mistaking hard words, spoken in mystery and allegory, such as *faith*, *justification*, *imputation*, *righteousness*, and *works*, we must consider that the word *faith* in Scripture is very ambiguous: this shown.

2. As it is in the word *faith*, so also it is in that of *works*; by which is meant sometimes the things done, sometimes the labor of doing, sometimes the good will, &c.

3. So again is it in the word *justification*; for God is justified, and wisdom is justified, and man is justified; and a sinner is not justified, as long as he continues in sin; and is justified when he repents and is pardoned, &c.

4. Not only the word *faith*, but also *charity*, and *godliness*, and *religion*, signify sometimes particular graces, and sometimes the union of them all.

5. Neither can this phenomenon be solved by saying that faith alone does justify, yet when she justifies, she is not alone, but good works must follow; which is said to no purpose: four reasons for this given.

The consequence of these observations is briefly this:

That no man should fool himself by disputing about the philosophy of justification, and what casuality faith has in it, and whether it be the act of faith that justifies, or the habit; whether faith as a good work, or faith as an instrument, &c. Let us rather look to the theology of it; the direct duty, the end of faith, and the work of faith; the conditions and instruments of our salvation, &c.; how faith can destroy our sin, and unite us to God: this part of the subject enlarged on.

The text has in it two propositions; a negative and an affirmative. The negative is, *By faith only* a man is not justified: the affirmative, *By works also* a man is justified.

1. With regard to the first; by *faith only*, is here meant, faith without obedience. For what do we think of those that detain the faith in unrighteousness? They have faith, else they could not keep it in so evil a cabinet: but yet the Apostle reckons them among the reprobates, who, for all their faith, shall have no part with faithful Abraham; for none are his children but they that do the works of Abraham: this topic fully enlarged on. So much for the negative proposition of the text, *a man is not justified by faith alone*, that is, by faith which hath not in it charity and obedience.

2. If faith alone will not do, what will? The affirmative part of the text answers: not faith alone; but faith, with works as an ingredient: *a man is justified by works.* It will be to no purpose to say that *faith* alone does justify, if, when a man is justified, he be not the nearer to salvation. Now that without obedience no man can see the Lord, is so evident from Holy Scripture, that he who denies it can have no faith. If faith purge not away our sins, it can never justify: this farther considered in general. Next come the particular considerations which follow.

1. No man's sins are pardoned, but in the same measure in which they are mortified and taken away; so that if faith does

not cure our sinful natures, it can never justify, or procure our pardon: and therefore it is, that as soon as ever faith in Jesus was preached, at the same time also they preached repentance from dead works: this topic enlarged on and illustrated.

2. No man is actually justified, but he that is in some measure sanctified; for justification, when it is attributed to any cause, does not always signify justification actual: this topic explained.

3. He that does not believe the promises of the gospel cannot pretend to faith in Christ: but the promises are all made to us on the conditions of obedience; and he that does not believe them as Christ made them, believes them not at all: this subject enlarged on. Thus much for the affirmative proposition of the text, *a man is justified by works*. But there is still more in it to be considered. St. James does not say, *we are justified by works, and are not justified by faith;* for that had been irreconcilable with St. Paul: but we are so justified by works, that it is not by faith alone: it is by faith and works together; that is, *by the obedience of faith*. Faith and good works are no distinct parts, but members of one entire body: they together work the righteousness of God: this topic fully enlarged on. Some practical considerations proposed.

1. In the early ages of Christianity there was no distinction of sects and opinions in the Church: she knew no difference of men, but good and bad: there was no separation made except by piety and impiety; which is all one, says Epiphanius, with fidelity and infidelity: this topic enlarged on, and illustrated.

2. When our faith is spoken of as the great instrument of justification and salvation, let us take Abraham's faith as our best pattern, and that will end the dispute; because he was justified by faith, when his faith was mighty in effect; when it passed into an act of the most glorious obedience, &c.

3. Let every one take heed, lest by an importune adherence to, and reliance on a mistaken faith, he really make shipwreck

of a right faith, like Hymenæus and Alexander, who lost their faith by putting away a good conscience.

4. From these premises we may see but too evidently, that hough a great part of mankind pretend to be saved by faith, yet they know not what it is, or else wilfully mistake it, and found their hopes on the sand. Believing is the least thing in a justifying faith: for faith is a conjugation of many ingredients, and faith is a covenant, and a law, and obedience, and a work, and a sincere closing with the terms of the gospel in every particular: this topic enlarged on at full length. To live a wicked life, and then to be confident that in death God will pardon us, is not faith, but a direct want of faith. If we did believe the promises on their proper conditions, or that God's commandments were righteous and true, or that his threats were as really intended as they are terribly spoken, we should not dare to live at the rate we do. But *wicked men have not faith*, says St. Paul; and then the wonder ceases.

Let us therefore cast up our reckonings impartially; let us see what will be required at our hands; and let us not think that we shall be justified by faith, unless our faith be greater than all our passions. Conclusion.

SERMON III.

FIDES FORMATA; OR, FAITH WORKING BY LOVE.

JAMES, CHAP. II.—VERSE 24.

You see, then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

THAT we are 'justified by faith,' St. Paul tells us;* that we are also 'justified by works,' we are told in my text; and both may be true. But that this justification is wrought by faith without works, 'to him that worketh not, but believeth,' saith St. Paul: that this is not wrought without works, St. James is as express for his negative as St. Paul was for his affirmative; and how both these should be true, is something harder to unriddle. But, *affirmanti incumbit probatio*, "he that affirms must prove;" and therefore St. Paul proves his doctrine by the example of Abraham, to whom faith was imputed for righteousness; and therefore, not by works. And what can be answered to this? Nothing but this, that St. James uses the very same argument to prove that our justification is by works also; 'For our father Abraham was justified by works, when he offered up his son Isaac.'† Now which of these says true? Certainly both of them; but neither of them have been well understood; insomuch that they have not only made divisions of heart among the faithful, but one party relies on faith to the disparagement of good life, and the other makes

* Rom. iii. 28. iv. 5. v. 1. x. 10. Gal. ii. 16. † James ii. 9.

works to be the main ground of our hope and confidence, and consequently to exclude the efficacy of faith: the one makes Christian religion a lazy and inactive institution; and the other a bold presumption on ourselves; while the first tempts us to live like heathens, and the other recalls us to live the life of Jews: while one says, 'I am of Paul,' and another, 'I am of St. James,' and both of them put it in danger of evacuating the institution and the death of Christ; one looking on Christ only as a Lawgiver, and the other only as a Saviour. The effects of these are very sad, and by all means to be diverted by all the wise considerations of the Spirit.

My purpose is not with subtle arts to reconcile them that never disagreed; the two Apostles spake by the same Spirit, and to the same last design, though to differing intermedial purposes: but because the great end of faith, the design, the definition, the state, the economy of it, is that all believers should not live according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. Before I fall to the close handling of the text, I shall premise some preliminary considerations, to prepare the way of holiness, to explicate the differing senses of the Apostles, to understand the question and the duty, by removing the causes of the vulgar mistakes of most men in this article; and then proceed to the main inquiry.

1. That no man may abuse himself or others by mistaking of hard words, spoken in mystery, with allegorical expressions to secret senses, wrapped up in a cloud; such as are 'faith, and justification, and imputation, and righteousness, and works,' be pleased to consider, that the very word 'faith' is, in Scripture, infinitely ambiguous, insomuch that in the Latin concordances of St. Jerome's Bible, published by Robert Stephens, you may see no less than twenty-two several senses and acceptations of the word 'faith,' set down with the several places of Scripture referring to them; to which if, out of my own observation, I could add no more, yet these are an abundant demonstration that whatsoever is said of the efficacy of faith for justification, is not to be taken in such a sense as will weaken the necessity and our carefulness of good life, when the word may, in so many other senses, be taken to verify the affirmation of St.

Paul, of 'justification by faith,' so as to reconcile it to 'the necessity of obedience.'

2. As it is in the word 'faith,' so it is in 'works;' for by works is meant sometimes the thing done,—sometimes the labor of doing,—sometimes the good will;—it is sometimes taken for a state of good life,—sometimes for the covenant of works;—it sometimes means the works of the law,—sometimes the works of the gospel;—sometimes it is taken for a perfect, actual, unsinning obedience,—sometimes for a sincere endeavor to please God;—sometimes they are meant to be such which can challenge the reward as of debt;—sometimes they mean only a disposition of the person to receive the favor and the grace of God. Now since our good works can be but of one kind (for ours cannot be meritorious, ours cannot be without sin all our life, they cannot be such as need no repentance), it is no wonder if we must be justified without works in this sense; for by such works no man living can be justified: and these St. Paul calls 'the works of the law,' and sometimes he calls them 'our righteousness;' and these are the covenant of works. But because we came into the world to serve God, and God will be obeyed, and Jesus Christ came into the world to save us from sin, and 'to redeem to himself a people zealous of good works,' and hath, to this purpose, revealed to us all his Father's will, and destroyed the works of the devil, and gives us his Holy Spirit, and by him we shall be justified in this obedience; therefore, when works signify a sincere, hearty endeavor to keep all God's commands, out of a belief in Christ, that if we endeavor to do so, we shall be helped by his grace, and if we really do so, we shall be pardoned for what is past, and if we continue to do so, we shall receive a crown of glory; therefore, it is no wonder that it is said we are to be justified by works; always meaning, not the works of the law, that is, works that are meritorious, works that can challenge the reward, works that need no mercy, no repentance, no humiliation, and no appeal to grace and favor; but always meaning works that are an obedience to God by the measures of good-will, and a sincere endeavor, and the faith of the Lord Jesus.

3. But thus also it is in the word 'justification:' for God is

justified, and wisdom is justified, and man is justified, and a sinner is not justified as long as he continues in sin; and a sinner is justified when he repents, and when he is pardoned; and an innocent person is justified when he is declared to be no criminal; and a righteous man is justified when he is saved; and a weak Christian is justified when his imperfect services are accepted for the present, and himself thrust forward to more grace; and he that is justified may be justified more; and every man that is justified to one purpose, is not so to all; and faith, in divers senses, gives justification in as many; and therefore, though to every sense of faith there is not always a degree of justification in any, yet when the faith is such that justification is the product and correspondent,—as that faith may be imperfect, so the justification is but begun, and either must proceed farther, or else, as the faith will die, so the justification will come to nothing. The like observation might be made concerning imputation, and all the words used in this question; but these may suffice till I pass to other particulars.

4. Not only the word 'faith,' but also 'charity,' and 'godliness,' and 'religion,' signify sometimes particular graces; and sometimes they suppose universally, and mean conjugations and unions of graces, as is evident to them that read the Scriptures with observation. Now when justification is attributed to faith, or salvation to godliness, they are to be understood in the aggregate sense; for, that I may give but one instance of this, when St. Paul speaks of faith as it is a particular grace, and separate from the rest, he also does separate it from all possibility of bringing us to heaven: 'Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing:'* when faith includes charity, it will bring us to heaven; when it is alone, when it is without charity, it will do nothing at all.

5. Neither can this φαινόμενον be solved by saying, that though Faith alone does justify, yet when she does justify, she is not alone, but good works must follow; for this is said to no purpose:

* 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

1. Because if we be justified by faith alone, the work is done, whether charity does follow or no; and, therefore, that want of charity cannot hurt us.

2. There can be no imaginable cause why charity and obedience should be at all necessary, if the whole work can be done without it.

3. If obedience and charity be not a condition of our salvation, then it is not necessary to follow faith; but if it be, it does as much as faith, for that is but a part of the condition.

4. If we can be saved without charity and keeping the commandments, what need we trouble ourselves for them? If we cannot be saved without them, then either faith without them does not justify; or if it does, we are never the better, for we may be damned for all that justification.

The consequent of these observations is briefly this:

That no man should fool himself by disputing about the philosophy of justification, and what causality faith hath in it, and whether it be the act of faith that justifies, or the habit? Whether faith as a good work, or faith as an instrument? Whether faith as it is obedience, or faith as it is an access to Christ? Whether as a hand, or as a heart? Whether by its own innate virtue, or by the efficacy of the object? Whether as a sign, or as a thing signified? Whether by introduction, or by perfection? Whether in the first beginnings, or in its last and best productions? Whether by inherent worthiness, or adventitious imputations? *Uberiùs ista quæso* (that I may use the words of Cicero*): *hæc enim spinosiora, prius, ut confitear, me cogunt, quam ut assentiar:* these things are knotty, and too intricate to do any good; they may amuse us, but never instruct us; and they have already made men careless and confident, disputative and troublesome, proud and uncharitable, but neither wiser nor better. Let us therefore leave these weak ways of troubling ourselves or others, and directly look to the theology of it, the direct duty, the end of faith, and the work of faith, the conditions and the instruments of our salvation, the just foundation of our hopes, how our faith can destroy our sin,

* Tuscul. i. 8. Davis.

and how it can unite us unto God; how by it we can be made partakers of Christ's death, and imitators of his life. For since it is evident, by the premises, that this article is not to be determined or relied on by arguing from words of many significations, we must walk by a clearer light, by such plain sayings and dogmatical propositions of Scripture, which evidently teach us our duty, and place our hopes on that which cannot deceive us, that is, which require obedience, which call on us to glorify God, and to do good to men, and to keep all God's commandments with diligence and sincerity.

For since the end of our faith is, that we may be disciples and servants of the Lord Jesus, advancing his kingdom here, and partaking of it hereafter; since we are commanded to believe what Christ taught, that it may appear as reasonable as it is necessary to do what he hath commanded; since faith and works are in order one to the other, it is impossible that evangelical faith and evangelical works should be opposed one to the other in the effecting of our salvation. So that as it is to no purpose for Christians to dispute whether we are justified by faith or the works of the law, that is, the covenant of works, without the help of faith and the auxiliaries and allowances of mercy on God's part, and repentance on ours; because no Christian can pretend to this; so it is perfectly foolish to dispute whether Christians are to be justified by faith, or the works of the gospel; for I shall make it appear that they are both the same thing. No man disparages faith but he that says faith does not work righteousness; for he that says so, says indeed it cannot justify; for he says that faith is alone: it is 'faith only,' and the words of my text are plain: 'You see,' saith St. James, that is, it is evident to your sense, it is as clear as an ocular demonstration, 'that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.'

My text hath in it these two propositions; a negative and an affirmative. The negative is this; 1. 'By faith only' a man is not justified. The affirmative; 2. 'By works also' a man is justified.

When I have briefly discoursed of these, I shall only add such practical considerations as shall make the doctrines useful, and tangible, and material.

1. By faith only a man is not justified. By *faith only*, here is meant, faith without obedience. For what do we think of those that detain the faith in unrighteousness? They have faith, they could not else keep it in so ill a cabinet: but yet the Apostle reckons them amongst the reprobates; for the abominable, the reprobates, and the disobedient, are all one; and, therefore, such persons, for all their faith, shall have no part with faithful Abraham: for none are his children but they that do the works of Abraham. Abraham's faith, without Abraham's works, is nothing; for of him 'that hath faith and hath not works,' St. James asks, 'can faith save him?'* meaning, that it is impossible. For what think we of those, that did miracles in Christ's name, and in his name cast out devils? Have not they faith? Yes, *omnem fidem*, 'all faith,' that is, alone, for 'they could remove mountains:' but yet to many of them Christ will say, 'Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity; I know you not.' Nay, at last, what think we of the devils themselves? Have not they faith? Yes; and this faith is not *fides miraculorum* neither; but it is an operative faith, it works a little; for it makes them tremble; and it may be, that is more than thy faith does to thee: and yet dost thou hope to be saved by a faith that does less to thee than the devil's faith does to him? That is impossible. For 'faith without works is dead,' saith St. James. It is *manus arida*, saith St. Austin; "it is a withered hand;" and that which is dead cannot work the life of grace in us, much less obtain eternal life for us. In short, a man may have faith, and yet do the works of unrighteousness; he may have faith, and be a devil; and then what can such a faith do to him or for him? It can do him no good in the present constitution of affairs. St. Paul, from whose mistaken words much noise hath been made in this question, is clear in this particular: 'Nothing in Christ Jesus can avail, but faith working by charity;'† that is, as he expounds himself once and again, 'nothing but a new creature, nothing but keeping the commandments of God.'‡ If faith be defined to be any thing that does not change our natures, and make us to be a new creation unto God; if keeping the commandments be

* Chap. ii. 14. † Gal. v. 6. ‡ Gal. vi. 15. 1 Cor. vii. 19.

not in the definition of faith, it avails nothing at all. Therefore deceive not yourselves; they are the words of our blessed Lord himself: 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord,' that is, not every one that confesses Christ, and believes in him, calling Christ Master and Lord, shall be saved; 'but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven.' These things are so plain, that they need no commentary; so evident, that they cannot be denied: and to these I add but this one truth; that faith alone without a good life is so far from justifying a sinner, that it is one of the greatest aggravations of his condemnation in the whole world. For no man can be so greatly damned as he that hath faith; for unless he knows his Master's will, that is, by faith be convinced, and assents to the revelations of the will of God, 'he can be beaten but with few stripes:' but he that believes, hath no excuse; he is *αὐτοκατάκριτος*, 'condemned by the sentence of his own heart,' and, therefore, *πολλαὶ πληγαί*, 'many stripes,' the greater condemnation, shall be his portion. Natural reason is a light to the conscience, but faith is a greater; and therefore, if it be not followed, it damns deeper than the hell of the infidels and uninstructed. And so I have donè with the negative proposition of my text; a man is not justified by faith alone, that is, by faith which hath not in it charity and obedience.

2. If faith alone will not do it, what will? The affirmative part of the text answers; not faith alone; but works must be an ingredient: 'a man is justified by works;' and that is now to be explicated and proved. It will be absolutely to no purpose to say that faith alone does justify, if, when a man is justified, he is never the nearer to be saved. Now that without obedience no man can go to heaven, is so evident in holy Scripture, that he that denies it, hath no faith. 'There is no peace, saith my God, unto the wicked;'* and 'I will not justify a sinner,'† saith God; unless faith purges away our sins, it can never justify. Let a man believe all the revelations of God; if that belief ends in itself, and goes no further, it is like physic taken to purge the stomach; if it do not work, it is so far from bringing health, that itself is a new sickness. Faith is a

* Isaiah, lvii. 21. † Exod. xxv. 7.

great purger and purifier of the soul, 'purifying your hearts by faith,' saith the Apostle. It is the best physic in the world for a sinful soul; but if it does not work, it corrupts in the stomach, it makes us to rely on weak propositions and trifling confidences, it is but a dreaming μετὰ πολλῆς φαντασίας, "a fantastic dream," and introduces pride or superstition, swelling thoughts and presumptions of the divine favor: but what saith the Apostle? 'Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man can see God:'* mark that. If faith does not make you charitable and holy, talk no more of justification by it, for you shall never see the glorious face of God. Faith indeed is a title and relation to Christ; it is a naming of his names; but what then? Why then, saith the Apostle, 'let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity.'

For let any man consider, can the faith of Christ and the hatred of God stand together? Can any man be justified, that does not love God? Or can any man love God and sin at the same time? And does not he love sin, that falls under its temptation, and obeys it in the lusts thereof, and delights in the vanity, and makes excuses for it, and returns to it with passion, and abides with pleasure? This will not do it; such a man cannot be justified for all his believing. But, therefore, the Apostle shows us a more excellent way: 'This is a true saying, and I will that thou affirm constantly, that they who have believed in God, be careful to maintain good works.'† The Apostle puts great force on this doctrine, he arms it with a double preface; the saying is 'true,' and it is to be 'constantly affirmed;' that is, it is not only true, but necessary; it is like Pharaoh's dream, doubled, because it is bound on us by the decree of God; and it is unalterably certain that every believer must do good works, or his believing will signify little; nay more than so, every man must be careful to do good works; and more yet, he must carefully maintain them; that is, not do them by fits and interrupted returns, but προίστασθαι, to be incumbent on them, to dwell on them, to maintain good works, that is, to persevere in them. But I am yet but in the ge-

* Heb. xii. 14. † Titus, iii. 8.

neral: be pleased to go along with me in these particular considerations.

1. No man's sins are pardoned, but in the same measure in which they are mortified, destroyed, and taken away; so that if faith does not cure our sinful natures, it never can justify, it never can procure our pardon. And therefore it is, that as soon as ever faith in the Lord Jesus was preached, at the same time also they preached repentance from dead works: insomuch that St. Paul reckons it among the fundamentals and first principles of Christianity;* nay, the Baptist preached repentance and amendment of life as a preparation to the faith of Christ. And I pray consider; can there be any forgiveness of sins without repentance? But if an Apostle should preach forgiveness to all that believe, and this belief did not also mean that they should repent and forsake their sin,—the sermons of the Apostle would make Christianity nothing else but the sanctuary of Romulus, a device to get together all the wicked people of the world, and to make them happy without any change of manners. Christ came to other purposes; he came 'to sanctify us and to cleanse us by his word:'† the word of faith was not for itself, but was a design of holiness, and the very 'grace of God did appear,' for this end; that 'teaching us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live holily, justly, and soberly in this present world:'‡ he came to gather a people together; not like David's army, when Saul pursued him, but the armies of the Lord, 'a faithful people, a chosen generation;' and what is that? The Spirit of God adds, 'a people zealous of good works.' Now as Christ proved his power to forgive sins by curing the poor man's palsy, because a man is never pardoned, but when the punishment is removed; so the great act of justification of a sinner, the pardoning of his sins, is then only effected, when the spiritual evil is taken away: that is the best indication of a real and an eternal pardon, when God takes away the hardness of the heart, the love of sin, the accursed habit, the evil inclination, the sin that doth so easily beset us: and when that is gone, what remains within us that God can hate? Nothing stays behind but God's creation, the work of his own hands,

* Heb. vi. 1. † 1 John, iii. 8. ‡ Eph. v. 25. Tit. ii. 11.

the issues of his Holy Spirit. The faith of a Christian is πάσης ἁμαρτάδος ἀναιρετική, 'it destroys the whole body of sin;' and to suppose that Christ pardons a sinner, whom he doth not also purge and rescue from the dominion of sin, is to affirm that he justifies the wicked; that he calls good evil and evil good; that he delights in a wicked person; that he makes a wicked man all one with himself; that he makes the members of a harlot at the same time also the members of Christ: but all this is impossible, and therefore ought not to be pretended to by any Christian. Severe are those words of our blessed Saviour, 'Every plant in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away:'* faith ingrafts us into Christ; by faith we are inserted into the vine; but the plant that is ingrafted, must also be parturient and fruitful, or else it shall be quite cut off from the root, and thrown into the everlasting burning: and this is the full and plain meaning of those words so often used in Scripture for the magnification of faith, 'The just shall live by faith:' no man shall live by faith but the just man; he indeed is justified by faith, but no man else; the unjust and the unrighteous man hath no portion in this matter. That is the first great consideration in this affair; no man is justified in the least sense of justification, that is, when it means nothing but the pardon of sins, but when his sin is mortified and destroyed.

2. No man is actually justified but he that is in some measure sanctified. For the understanding and clearing of which proposition, we must know, that justification, when it is attributed to any cause, does not always signify justification actual. Thus, when it is said in Scripture, 'We are justified by the death of Christ,' it is but the same thing as to say, 'Christ died for us;' and he rose again for us too, that we might indeed be justified in due time, and by just measures and dispositions: 'he died for our sins, and rose again for our justification;' that is, by his death and resurrection, he hath obtained this power, and effected this mercy, that if we believe him and obey, we shall be justified and made capable of all the blessings of the kingdom. But that this is no more but a capacity of pardon, of grace, and of salvation, appears not only by God's requiring

* John, xv. 2.

obedience as a condition on our parts, but by his expressly attributing this mercy to us at such times, and in such circumstances, in which it is certain and evident that we could not actually be justified; for so saith the Scripture: 'We, when we were enemies, were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; and while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;'* that is, then was our justification wrought on God's part; that is, then he intended this mercy to us, then he resolved to show us favor, to give us promises, and laws, and conditions, and hopes, and an infallible economy of salvation; and when faith lays hold on this grace, and this justification, then we are to do the other part of it; that is, as God made it potential by the death and resurrection of Christ, so we, laying hold on these things by faith, and working the righteousness of faith, that is, performing what is required on our parts, we, I say, make it actual; and for this very reason it is that the Apostle puts more emphasis on the resurrection of Christ than on his death, 'Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again.'† And 'Christ was both delivered for our sins, and is risen again for our justification;'‡ implying to us, that as it is in the principal, so it is in the correspondent; our sins indeed are potentially pardoned, when they are marked out for death and crucifixion; when, by resolving and fighting against sin, we die to sin daily, and are so made conformable to his death; but we must partake of Christ's resurrection before this justification can be actual; when we are 'dead to sin, and are risen again unto righteousness,' then, as we are 'partakers of his death,' so we shall 'be partakers of his resurrection,' saith St. Paul; that is, then we are truly, effectually, and indeed justified; till then we are not.

'He that loveth gold shall not be justified,' saith the wise Bensirach;§ he that is covetous, let his faith be what it will, shall not be accounted righteous before God, because he is not so in himself, and he is not so in Christ, for he is not in Christ at all; he hath no righteousness in himself, and he hath none in Christ; for if we be in Christ, or if 'Christ be in us, the body

* Rom. v. 8. 10. † Rom. viii. 28. ‡ Rom. iv. 25.
§ Ecclus. xxxi.

is dead by reason of sin, and the spirit is life because of righteousness:'* for this is the τὸ πιστὸν, 'that faithful thing,' that is, the faithfulness is manifested; the *emun*, from whence comes *emunah*, which is the Hebrew word for 'faith,' from whence 'amen' is derived. *Fiat quod dictum est hinc inde; hoc fidum est;* when God and we both say amen to our promises and undertakings. *Fac fidelis sis fideli; cave fidem fluxam geras;* said he in the comedy;† God is faithful, be thou so too; for if thou failest him, thy faith hath failed thee. *Fides sumitur pro eo, quod est inter utrumque placitum*, says one; and then it is true which the prophet and the Apostle said, 'the just shall live by faith,' in both senses: *ex fide mea vivet, ex fide sua*; "we live by God's faith, and by our own;" by his fidelity, and by ours. When the righteousness of God becomes 'your righteousness, and exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees;' when the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, 'by walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;' then we are justified by God's truth and by ours, by his grace and our obedience. So that now we see that justification and sanctification cannot be distinguished but as words of art signifying the various steps of progression in the same course; they may be distinguished in notion and speculation, but never when they are to pass on to material events; for no man is justified but he that is also sanctified. They are the express words of St. Paul: 'Whom he did foreknow, them he did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son,' to be like to Christ; and then it follows, 'whom he hath predestinated,' so predestinated, 'them he hath also called; and whom he hath called, them he hath also justified:' and then it follows, 'whom he hath justified, them he hath also glorified.'‡ So that no man is justified, that is, so as to signify salvation, but sanctification must be precedent to it; and that was my second consideration ὅπερ ἔδει δεῖξαι, "that which I was to prove."

3. I pray consider, that he that does not believe the promises of the gospel, cannot pretend to faith in Christ; but the promises are all made to us on the conditions of obedience, and he that does not believe them as Christ made them, believes them

* Rom. viii. 10. † Plaut. Captiv. ii. 3. 79.

‡ Rom. viii. 29.

not at all. 'In well-doing commit yourselves to God as unto a faithful Creator;' there is no committing ourselves to God without well-doing: 'For God will render to every man according to his deeds: to them that obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath; but to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality, to them eternal life.'* So that if faith apprehends any other promises, it is illusion, and not faith; God gave us none such, Christ purchased none such for us; search the Bible over, and you shall find none such. But if faith lays hold on these promises that are, and as they are, then it becomes an article of our faith, that without obedience and a sincere endeavor to keep God's commandments, no man living can be justified: and, therefore, let us take heed, when we magnify the free grace of God, we do not exclude the conditions which this free grace hath set on us. Christ freely died for us, God pardons us freely in our first access to him; we could never deserve pardon, because when we need pardon we are enemies, and have no good thing in us; and he freely gives us of his Spirit, and freely he enables us to obey him; and for our little imperfect services he freely and bountifully will give us eternal life: here is free grace all the way, and he overvalues his pitiful services, who thinks that he deserves heaven by them; and that if he does his duty tolerably, eternal life is not a free gift to him, but a deserved reward.

Conscius est animus meus, experientia testis,
Mystica quæ retuli dogmata vera scio.
Non tamen idcirco scio me fore glorificandum;
Spes mea crux Christi, gratia, non opera.

It was the meditation of the wise chancellor of Paris: "I know that without a good life, and the fruits of repentance, a sinner cannot be justified; and, therefore, I must live well, or I must die for ever: but if I do live holily, I do not think that I deserve heaven: it is the cross of Christ that procures me grace; it is the Spirit of Christ that gives me grace; it is the mercy and the free gift of Christ that brings me unto glory." But yet he that shall exclude the works of faith from the justification of a sinner by the blood of Christ, may as well exclude

* Rom. ii. 6, 7, 8.

faith itself; for faith itself is one of the works of God: it is a good work, so said Christ to them that asked him, 'What shall we do to work the works of God?' Jesus said, 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.'* Faith is not only the foundation of good works, but itself is a good work; it is not only the cause of obedience, but a part of it; it is not only, as the son of Sirach calls it, *initium adhærendi Deo*, 'a beginning of cleaving unto God,' but it carries us on to the perfection of it. Christ is the Author and Finisher of our faith; and when faith is finished, a good life is made perfect in our kind: let no man therefore expect events, for which he hath no promise; nor call for God's fidelity without his own faithfulness; nor snatch at a promise without performing the condition; nor think faith to be a hand to apprehend Christ, and to do nothing else; for that will but deceive us, and turn religion into words, and holiness into hypocrisy, and the promises of God into a snare, and the truth of God into a lie. For when God made a covenant of faith, he made also the νόμος πίστεως, 'the law of faith;' and when he admitted us to a covenant of more mercy than was in the covenant of works, or of the law, he did not admit us to a covenant of idleness, and an incurious walking in a state of disobedience; but the mercy of God leadeth us to repentance, and when he gives us better promises, he intends we should pay him a better obedience: when he forgives us what is past, he intends we should sin no more; when he offers us his graces, he would have us to make use of them; when he causes us to distrust ourselves, his meaning his we should rely on him; when he enables us to do what he commands us, he commands us to do all that we can. And, therefore, this covenant of faith and mercy is also a covenant of holiness, and the grace that pardons us does also purify us: for so saith the Apostle, 'He that hath this hope purifies himself, even as God is pure.' And when we are so, then we are justified indeed; this is the νόμος πίστεως, 'the law of faith;' and by works in this sense, that is, by the works of faith, by faith working by love, and producing fruits worthy of amendment of life, we are justified before God. And so I have done with the affirmative proposition of my text: you see that 'a man is justified by works.'

* John, vi. 28, 29.

But there is more in it than this matter yet amounts to: for St. James does not say, 'we are justified by works, and are not justified by faith;' that had been irreconcilable with St. Paul: but we are so justified by works, that it is not by faith alone; it is faith and works together: that is, it is by the ὑπακοὴ πίστεως, 'by the obedience of faith,' by the works of faith, by the law of faith, by righteousness evangelical, by the conditions of the gospel, and the measures of Christ. I have many things to say in this particular; but because I have but a little time left to say them in, I will sum it all up in this proposition; that in the question of justification and salvation, faith and good works are no part of a distinction, but members of one intire body. Faith and good works together work the righteousness of God: that is, that I may speak plainly, justifying faith contains in it obedience; and if this be made good, then the two Apostles are reconciled to each other, and both of them to the necessity, the indispensable necessity, of a good life.

Now that justifying and saving faith must be defined by something more than an act of understanding, appears not only in this, that St. Peter reckons faith as distinctly from knowlege as he does from patience, or strength, or brotherly kindness; saying, 'Add to your faith, virtue; to virtue, knowlege;'* but in this also, because an error in life, and whatsoever is against holiness, is against faith: and, therefore, St. Paul reckons the lawless and the disobedient, murderers of parents, man-stealing, and such things, to be against sound doctrines; for the doctrine of faith is called ἡ κατ' εὐσέβειαν διδασκαλία, 'the doctrine that is according to godliness.' And when St. Paul prays against ungodly men, he adds this reason, οὐ γὰρ πάντων ἡ πίστις, 'for all men have not faith;'† meaning that wicked men are infidels and unbelievers; and particularly he affirms of him 'that does not provide for his own, that he hath denied the faith.'‡ Now from hence it follows that faith is godliness, because all wickedness is infidelity; it is an apostasy from the faith. *Ille erit, ille nocens, qui me tibi fecerat hostem;* he that sins against God, he is the enemy to the faith of Jesus Christ; and therefore we deceive ourselves, if we place faith

* 2 Pet. i. 5. † 2 Thess. iii. 2. ‡ 1 Tim. v. 8.

in the understanding only; it is not that, and it does not well there, but ἐν καθαρᾷ συνειδήσει, saith the Apostle; the mystery of faith is kept no where, it dwells no where, but 'in a pure conscience.'

For I consider, that, since all moral habits are best defined by their operation, we can best understand what faith is by seeing what it does. To this purpose hear St. Paul: 'By faith, Abel offered up to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. By faith, Noah made an ark. By faith, Abraham left his country, and offered up his son. By faith, Moses chose to suffer affliction, and accounted the reproach of Christ greater than all the riches of Egypt.'* In short, the children of God, 'by faith, subdued kingdoms, and wrought righteousness.' To work righteousness is as much the duty and work of faith as believing is. So that now we may quickly make an end of this great inquiry, whether a man is justified by faith, or by works, for he is so by both: if you take it alone, faith does not justify: but take it in the aggregate sense, as it is used in the question of justification by St. Paul, and then faith does not only justify, but it sanctifies too; and then you need to inquire no further; obedience is a part of the definition of faith, as much as it is of charity. 'This is love,' saith St. John, 'that we keep his commandments.' And the very same is affirmed of faith too by Bensirach, 'He that believeth the Lord, will keep his commandments.'†

I have now done with all the propositions expressed and implied in the text. Give me leave to make some practical considerations; and so I shall dismiss you from this attention.

1. The rise I take from the words of St. Epiphanius,‡ speaking in praise of the apostolical and purest ages of the church. There was, at first, no distinction of sects and opinions in the church: she knew no difference of men, but good and bad; there was no separation made, but what was made by piety or impiety, or, says he, which is all one, by fidelity and infidelity; πίστις μὲν ἐπέχουσα τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ εἰκόνα· ἀπιστία δὲ ἐπέχουσα τὸν ἀσεβείας χαρακτῆρα καὶ παρανομίας· "for faith hath in it the

* Heb. xi. † Ecclus. xxxii. 24.

‡ Panar. lib. i. edit. Basil. p. 8. l. 46.

image of godliness engraven, and infidelity hath the character of wickedness and prevarication." A man was not then esteemed a saint, for disobeying his bishop or an Apostle, nor for misunderstanding the hard sayings of St. Paul about predestination; to kick against the laudable customs of the church was not then accounted a note of the godly party; and to despise government was but an ill mark and weak indication of being a good Christian. The kingdom of God did not then consist in words, but in power, the power of godliness; though now we are fallen into another method; we have turned all religion into faith, and our faith is nothing but the productions of interest or disputing,—it is adhering to a party, and a wrangling against all the world beside; and when it is asked of what religion he is of, we understand the meaning to be, what faction does he follow; what are the articles of his sect, not what is the manner of his life: and if men be zealous for their party and that interest, then they are precious men, though otherwise they be covetous as the grave, factious as Dathan, schismatical as Corah, or proud as the fallen angels. Alas! these things will but deceive us; the faith of a Christian cannot consist in strifes about words, and perverse disputings of men. These things the Apostle calls 'profane and vain babblings;'* and, mark what he says of them, these things will increase ἐπὶ πλεῖον ἀσεβείας. They are, in themselves, ungodliness, and will produce more,—'they will increase unto more ungodliness.' But the faith of a Christian had other measures; that was faith then, which made men faithful to their vows in baptism. The faith of a Christian was the best security in contracts, and a Christian's word was as good as his bond, because he was faithful that promised, and a Christian would rather die than break his word, and was always true to his trust; he was faithful to his friend, and loved as Jonathan did David. This was the Christian faith then: their religion was, to hurt no man, and to do good to every man; and so it ought to be. 'True religion is to visit the fatherless and widow, and to keep ourselves unspotted of the world.' That is a good religion, that is 'pure and undefiled.' So St. James: and St. Chrysostom defines εὐσέβειαν, 'true

* 2 Tim. ii. 16.

religion,' to be πίστιν καθαρὰν καὶ ὀρθὸν βιόν, 'a pure faith and a godly life;' for they make up the whole mystery of godliness; and no man could then pretend to faith, but he that did do valiantly, and suffer patiently, and resist the devil, and overcome the world. These things are as properly the actions of faith, as alms is of charity; and, therefore, they must enter into the moral definition of it. And this was truly understood by Salvian, that wise and godly priest of Massilia: What is faith, and what is believing? saith he; *hominem fideliter Christo credere est fidelem Deo esse*, h. e. *fideliter Dei mandata servare:* "That man does faithfully believe in Christ, who is faithful unto God, —who faithfully keeps God's commandments;" and, therefore, let us measure our faith here, by our faithfulness to God, and by our diligence to do our Master's commandments; for *Christianorum omnis religio sine scelere et macula vivere*, said Lactantius; "The whole religion of a Christian is to live unblameably,"* that is, in all holiness and purity of conversation.

2. When our faith is spoken of as the great instrument of justification and salvation, take Abraham's faith as your best pattern, and that will end the dispute; because that he was justified by faith, when his faith was mighty in effect; when he trusted in God, when he believed the promises, when he expected a resurrection of the dead, when he was strong in faith, when he gave glory to God, when, against hope, he believed in hope; and when all this passed into an act of a most glorious obedience, even denying his greatest desires, contradicting his most passionate affections, offering to God the best thing he had, and exposing to death his beloved Isaac, his laughters, all his joy, at the command of God. 'By this faith he was justified,' saith St. Paul; 'by these works he was justified,' saith St. James; that is, by this faith working this obedience. And then all the difficulty is over; only remember this, your faith is weak, and will do but little for you, if it be not stronger than all your secular desires and all your peevish angers. Thus we find, in the holy gospels, this conjunction declared necessary, 'Whatsoever things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.'† Here is as glorious an

* Instit. lib. v. c. 9. † Mark, xii. 24.

event promised to faith as can be expressed; faith shall obtain any thing of God. True; but it is not faith alone, but faith in prayer; faith praying, but not faith simply believing. So St. James; the 'prayer of faith shall save the sick;' but adds, it must be 'the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man;' so that faith shall prevail, but there must be prayer in faith, and fervor in prayer, and devotion in fervor, and righteousness in devotion; and then impute the effect to faith if you please, provided that it be declared, that effect cannot be wrought by faith, unless it be so qualified. But Christ adds one thing more: 'When ye stand praying, forgive; but if ye will not forgive, neither will your Father forgive you.' So that it will be to no purpose to say a man is justified by faith, unless you mingle charity with it; for without the charity of forgiveness, there can be no pardon; and then justification is but a word, when it effects nothing.

3. Let every one take heed, that by an importune adhering to and relying on a mistaken faith, he do not really make a shipwreck of a right faith. Hymenæus and Alexander lost their faith by putting away a good conscience; and what matter is it of what religion or faith a man be of, if he be a villain and a cheat, a man of no truth, and of no trust, a lover of the world, and not a lover of God? But, I pray, consider, can any man have faith that denies God? That is not possible: and cannot a man as well deny God by an evil action, as by an heretical proposition? Cannot a man deny God by works, as much as by words? Hear what the Apostle says: 'They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.'* Disobedience is a denying God. *Nolumus hunc regnare*, is as plain a renouncing of Christ, as *Nolumus huic credere.* It is to no purpose to say we believe in Christ and have faith, unless Christ reign in our hearts by faith.

4. From these premises we may see but too evidently, that though a great part of mankind pretend to be saved by faith, yet they know not what it is, or else wilfully mistake it, and place their hopes on sand, or the more unstable water. Be-

* Tit. i. 16.

lieving is the least thing in a justifying faith; for faith is a conjugation of many ingredients, and faith is a covenant, and faith is a law, and faith is obedience, and faith is a work, and indeed it is a sincere cleaving to, and closing with the terms of the gospel in every instance, in every particular. Alas! the niceties of a spruce understanding, and the curious nothings of useless speculation, and all the opinions of men that make the divisions of heart, and do nothing else, cannot bring us one drop of comfort in the day of tribulation, and therefore are no parts of the strength of faith. Nay, when a man begins truly to fear God, and is in the agonies of mortification, all these new nothings and curiosities will lie neglected by, as baubles do by children, when they are deadly sick. But that only is faith that makes us to love God, to do his will, to suffer his impositions, to trust his promises, to see through a cloud, to overcome the world, to resist the devil, to stand in the day of trial, and to be comforted in all our sorrows. This is that precious faith so mainly necessary to be insisted on, that by it we may be sons of the free woman, *liberi a vitiis ac ritibus;* that the true Isaac may be in us, which is Christ according to the Spirit, the wisdom and power of God, a divine vigor and life, whereby we are enabled, with joy and cheerfulness, to walk in the way of God. By this you may try your faith, if you please, and make an end of this question: Do you believe in the Lord Jesus, yea or no? God forbid else; but if your faith be good, it will abide the trial. There are but three things that make the integrity of Christian faith; believing the words of God, confidence in his goodness, and keeping his commandments.

For the first, it is evident that every man pretends to it; if he calls himself a Christian, he believes all that is in the canon of the Scriptures; and if he did not, he were indeed no Christian. But now consider, what think we of this proposition? 'All shall be damned who believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness.'* Does not every man believe this? Is it possible they can believe there is any such thing as unrighteousness in the world, or any such thing as damnation, and yet commit that which the Scriptures call unrighteousness,

* 1 Thess. ii. 12.

and which all laws and all good men say is so? Consider how many unrighteous men there are in the world, and yet how few of them think they shall be damned. I know not how it comes to pass, but men go on strange principles, and they have made Christianity to be a very odd institution, if it had not better measures than they are pleased to afford it. There are two great roots of all evil, covetousness and pride, and they have infected the greatest parts of mankind, and yet no man thinks himself to be either covetous or proud; and, therefore, whatever you discourse against these sins, it never hits any man, but, like Jonathan's arrows to David, they fall short, or they fly beyond. Salvian complained of it in his time: *Hoc ad crimina nostra addimus, ut cum in omnibus rei simus, etiam bonos nos et sanctos esse credamus:* "This we add unto our crimes; we are the vilest persons in the world, and yet we think ourselves to be good people," and, when we die, make no question but we shall go to heaven.* There is no cause of this, but because we have not so much faith as believing comes to; and yet most men will pretend not only to believe, but to love Christ all this while. And how do they prove this? Truly they hate the memory of Judas, and curse the Jews that crucified Christ, and think Pilate a very miserable man, and that all the Turks are damned, and to be called Caiaphas is a word of reproach; and, indeed, there are many that do not much more for Christ than this comes to; things to as little purpose, and of as little signification. But so the Jews did hate the memory of Corah as we do of Caiaphas, and they built the sepulchre of the prophets; and we also are angry at them that killed the Apostles and the martyrs; but, in the mean time, we neither love Christ nor his saints; for we neither obey him, nor imitate them. And yet we should think ourselves highly injured, if one should call us infidels, and haters of Christ. But, I pray, consider; what is hating of any man, but designing and doing him all the injury and spite we can? Does not he hate Christ that dishonors him, that makes Christ's members the members of a harlot, that doth not feed and clothe these members? If the Jews did hate Christ when they crucified him, then so does

* Lib. iii.

a Christian too, when he crucifies him again. Let us not deceive ourselves; a Christian may be damned as well as a Turk; and Christians may with as much malice crucify Christ, as the Jews did: and so does every man that sins wilfully; he spills the blood of Christ, making it to be spent in vain. 'He that hateth you, hateth me; he that receives you, receives me,' said Christ to his Apostles. I wish the world had so much faith as to believe that; and by this try whether we love Christ, and believe in him, or no. I shall, for the trial of our faith, ask one easy question: Do we believe that the story of David and Jonathan is true? Have we so much faith as to think it possible that two rivals of a crown should love so dearly? Can any man believe this, and not be infinitely ashamed to see Christians, almost all Christians, to be irreconcilably angry, and ready to pull their brother's heart out, when he offers to take our land or money from us? Why do almost all men that go to law for right, hate one another's persons? Why cannot men with patience hear their titles questioned? But, if Christianity be so excellent a religion, why are so very many Christians so very wicked? Certainly they do not so much as believe the propositions and principles of their own religion: for the body of Christians is so universally wicked, that it would be a greater change to see Christians generally live according to their profession, than it was at first from infidelity to see them to turn believers. The conversion from Christian to Christian, from Christian in title to Christian in sincerity, would be a greater miracle than it was when they were converted from heathen and Jew to Christian. What is the matter? Is not 'repentance from dead works' reckoned by St. Paul* as one of the fundamental points of Christian religion? Is it not a piece of our catechism, the first thing we are taught, and is it not the last thing that we practise? We had better be without baptism than without repentance, and yet both are necessary; and, therefore, if we were not without faith, we should be without neither. Is not repentance a forsaking all sin, and an intire returning unto God? Who can deny this? And is it not plainly said in Scripture, 'Unless ye repent, ye shall all

* Heb. vi.

perish?' But show me the man that believes these things heartily; that is, show me a true penitent; he only believes the doctrines of repentance.

If I had time, I should examine your faith by your confidence in God, and by your obedience. But, if we fall in the mere believing, it is not likely we should do better in the other. But because all the promises of God are conditional, and there can be no confidence in the particular without a promise or revelation, it is not possible that any man that does not live well, should reasonably put his trust in God. To live a wicked life, and then to be confident that in the day of our death God will give us pardon, is not faith, but a direct want of faith. If we did believe the promises on their proper conditions, or believe that God's commandments were righteous and true, or that the threatenings were as really intended as they are terribly spoken,—we should not dare to live at the rate we do. But 'wicked men have not faith,' saith St. Paul; and then the wonder ceases.

But there are such palpable contradictions between men's practices and the fundamentals of our faith, that it was a material consideration of our blessed Saviour, 'When the Son of Man comes, shall he find faith on earth?' meaning it should be very hard and scant: 'Every man shall boast of his own goodness; *sed virum fidelem*, (saith Solomon) 'but a faithful man,' who can find?' Some men are very good when they are afflicted.

> Hanc tibi virtutem fracta facit urceus ansa,
> Et tristis nullo qui tepet igne focus;
> Et teges et cimex, et nudi sponda grabati,
> Et brevis atque eadem nocte dieque toga.*

When the gown of the day is the mantle of the night, and cannot, at the same time, cover the head, and make the feet warm; when they have but one broken dish and no spoon, then they are humble and modest; then they can suffer an injury and bear contempt: but give them riches, and they grow insolent; fear and pusillanimity did their first work, and an op-

* Martial, xi. 57.

portunity to sin undoes it all. *Bonum militem perdidisti, imperatorem pessimum creasti*, said Galba: "You have spoiled a good trooper, when you made me a bad commander." Others can never serve God but when they are prosperous; if they lose their fortune, they lose their faith, and quit their charity: *Non rata fides, ubi jam melior fortuna ruit;* if they become poor, they become liars and deceivers of their trust, envious and greedy, restless and uncharitable; that is, one way or other they show that they love the world, and by all the faith they pretend to, cannot overcome it.

Cast up, therefore, your reckonings impartially; see what is, what will be required at your hands: do not think you can be justified by faith, unless your faith be greater than all your passions: you have not the learning, not so much as the common notices of faith, unless you can tell when you are covetous, and reprove yourself when you are proud; but he that is so, and knows it not (and that is the case of most men), hath no faith, and neither knows God nor knows himself.

To conclude. He that hath true justifying faith, believes the power of God to be above the powers of nature; the goodness of God above the merit and disposition of our persons; the bounty of God above the excellency of our works; the truth of God above the contradiction of our weak arguings and fears; the love of God above our cold experience and ineffectual reason; and the necessities of doing good works above the faint excuses and ignorant pretences of disputing sinners: but want of faith makes us so generally wicked as we are, so often running to despair, so often baffled in our resolutions of a good life: but he whose faith makes him more than conqueror over these difficulties, to him Isaac shall be born even in his old age; the life of God shall be perfectly wrought in him; and by this faith, so operative, so strong, so lasting, so obedient, he shall be justified, and he shall be saved.

A

SERMON

PREACHED AT

THE CONSECRATION

OF

TWO ARCHBISHOPS AND TEN BISHOPS,

IN THE

CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. PATRICK, IN DUBLIN,

January 27, 1660.

TO THE

CHRISTIAN READER.

My obedience to the commands of the Right Honorable the Lords Justices, and the most Reverend and Learned Primate, and to the desires of my reverend brethren, put it past my inquiry, whether I ought to publish this following Sermon. I will not, therefore, excuse it, and say it might have advantages in the delivery, which it would want in the reading; and the ear would be kind to the piety of it, which was apparent in the design, when the eye would be severe in its censure of those arguments, which, as they could not be longer in that measure of time, so would have appeared more firm, if they could have had liberty to have been pursued to their utmost issue: but reason lies in a little room, and obedience in less; and although what I have here said, may not stop the mouths of men resolved to keep up a faction, yet I have said enough to the sober and pious, to them who love order, and hearken to the voice of the spouse of Christ, to the loving and to the obedient: and for those that are not so, I have no argument fit to be used, but prayer, and readiness to give them a reason, when they shall modestly demand it. In the mean time, I shall only desire them to make use of those truths which the more learned of their party have, by the evidence of fact, been forced to confess. Rivet affirms, that it descended *ex veteris ævi reliquiis*, that presbyters should be assistants or conjoined to the bishops (who is by this confessed to be the prin-

cipal), in the imposition of hands for ordination. Walo Messalinus acknowleges it to be *rem antiquissimam*, "a most ancient thing," that these two orders, viz., of bishops and presbyters, should be distinct, even in the middle, or in the beginning of the next age after Christ. David Blondel places it to be thirty-five years after the death of St. John. Now, then, episcopacy is confessed to be of about one thousand six hundred years' continuance; and if, before this, they can show any ordination by mere presbyters, by any but an Apostle, or an apostolical man; and if there were not visibly a distinction of powers and persons relatively in the ecclesiastical government; or if they can give a rational account why they, who are forced to confess the honor and distinct order of episcopacy, for about sixteen ages, should, in the dark interval of thirty-five years, in which they can pretend to no monument or record to the contrary, yet make unlearned scruples of things they cannot colorably prove; if, I say, they can reasonably account for these things, I, for my part, will be ready to confess, that they are not guilty of the greatest, the most unreasonable and inexcusable schism in the world; but else they have no color to palliate the unlearned crime: for will not all wise men in the world conclude, that the church of God, which was then holy, not in title only and design, but practically and materially, and persecuted, and not immerged in secular temptations, could not, all in one instant, join together to alter that form of church government, which Christ and his Apostles had so recently established, and, without a Divine warrant, destroy a Divine institution, not only to the confusion of the hierarchy, but to the ruin of their own souls? It were strange that so great a change should be, and no good man oppose it: *In toto orbe decretum est;* so St. Jerome: "All the world consented" in the advancement of the episcopal order; and, therefore, if we had no more to say for it, yet in prudence and piety we cannot say they would innovate in so great a matter.

But I shall enter no further on this inquiry: only I remember that it is not very many months since the bigots of the popish party cried out against us vehemently, and inquired, "Where is your church of England, since you have no unity? for your ecclesiastic head of unity, your bishops, are gone:" and if we should be desirous

to verify their argument, so as indeed to destroy episcopacy, we should too much advantage popery, and do the most imprudent and most impious thing in the world. But blessed be God, who hath restored that government, for which our late king, of glorious memory, gave his blood; and that, methinks, should very much weigh with all the king's true-hearted subjects, who should make it religion not to rob that glorious prince of the greatest honor of such a martyrdom. For my part, I think it fit to rest in these words of another martyr, St. Cyprian: *Si quis cum episcopo non sit, in ecclesia non esse:* "He that is not with the bishop, is not in the church;"* that is, he that goes away from him, and willingly separates, departs from God's church; and whether he can then be with God, is a very material consideration, and fit to be thought on by all that think heaven a more eligible good than the interests of a faction and the importune desire of rule can countervail.

However, I have, in the following papers, spoken a few things, which, I hope, may be fit to persuade them that are not infinitely prejudiced; and although two or three good arguments are as good as two or three hundred, yet my purpose here was to prove the dignity and necessity of the office and order episcopal, only that it might be as an economy to convey notice and remembrances of the great duty incumbent on all them that undertake this great charge. The dignity and the duty take one another by the hand, and are born together; only every sheep of the flock must take care to make the bishop's duty as easy as it can, by humility and love, by prayer and by obedience. It is, at the best, very difficult; but they who oppose themselves to government, make it harder and uncomfortable: but take heed, if thy bishop hath cause to complain to God of thee, for thy perverseness and uncharitable walking, thou wilt be the loser; and for us, we can only say, in the words of the prophet, "We will weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people:"† but our comfort is in God; for we can do nothing without him, but in him we can do all things; and, therefore, we will pray, *Domine, dabis pacem nobis; omnia enim opera nostra operatus es in nobis:* "God hath wrought all our

* Ep. 69. † Jerem. ix. 1.

works within us; and therefore he will give us peace, and give us his Spirit."*

"Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you; and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for all men have not faith."†

* Isa. xxvi. 12. † 2 Thess. iii. 1.

SUMMARY OF SERMON IV.

LUKE, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 42, 43.

THE words of the text shown not to be properly a question, the particle τὶς being, not interrogative, but hypothetical. In them something is insinuated, and much expressed.

1. That which is insinuated is only, who the stewards were whom Christ had, and would appoint over his church: they are not here named, but will be found out by their proper direction.

2. That which is expressed, is the office itself in a double capacity. 1. In its dignity, as a rule and government. 2. In the care and duty of it, which determines the government to be paternal and profitable. 3. Lastly, there is the reward of the faithful and wise dispensation of it. These are treated in order.

Who are these rulers of Christ's family? The Apostles shown to be first meant by the text: they were the first stewards: but their office dies not with them. Here then begins the inquiry; who are their successors? Some say, all who have any work or office in the family; others fix on the presbyters, saying that presbyter and bishop are the same thing, and have the same name in Scripture; and, therefore, the offices cannot be distinguished. This opinion refuted.

Who then are successors in the apostolical order?

I. It is certain that Christ appointed two sorts of ecclesiastical persons,—twelve apostles, and the seventy-two disciples: to these he gave a limited commission; to those a fulness of power: to these a temporary employment; to those a perpetual and

everlasting one. From these two societies, founded by Christ, the whole church of God derives its two superior orders in the sacred hierarchy; and as bishops do not claim a Divine right but by succession from the Apostles, so the presbyters cannot pretend to have been instituted by Christ, but by claiming a succession to the seventy-two. And then consider the difference; for the seventy-two had nothing but a mission on a temporary errand, and we hear nothing of them in Scripture; but on the Apostles Christ poured all ecclesiastical power, and made them the ordinary ministers of that Spirit, which was to abide with the church for ever.

But we may see the very thing itself—the very matter of fact. St. James, the bishop of Jerusalem, is by St. Paul called an Apostle: *other Apostles saw I none, save James, the Lord's brother.* This topic enlarged on.

Moreover, this great office passed forth into a demonstration and practice of the whole catholic church: testimonies of the ancient church, and of its adversaries, on this point, collected and commented on.

This part of the inquiry summed up in the sentence of the council of Chalcedon, determining the point in question; &c. The next consideration is that of the office itself.

II. This office is the stewardship, that is, episcopacy, or the office of a bishop. The word was chosen because it is in itself a monition of duty; and the faithful were used to it in the days of Moses and the prophets: this topic enlarged on. But our inquiry is not after the name, but the office, and the dignity and duty of it. It is called by St. Cyprian, "a high and a divine power from God of governing the church;" by St. Cyril, "a great and precious thing in the sight of God," &c.: but the account on which it is so desirable, is the same that makes it formidable: this topic enlarged on. It is shown that the honor does not pay for the burden.

But to render this discourse more useful, we must descend

to particulars: these will best be enumerated in a recital of the worthy offices and actions, by which Christian bishops have blessed and built up Christendom.

1. The Christian church was founded by bishops; not only because the Apostles, who were bishops, were the first preachers of the gospel, and planters of churches; but because the apostolical men, whom the Apostles used in planting and disseminating religion, were by all antiquity affirmed to have been diocesan bishops: this enlarged on; also the character for wisdom, &c., which is necessary to those who have succeeded them as stewards of Christ's family.

2. As bishops were the first fathers of churches, to which they gave being, so do they preserve them in being; for without sacraments there will be no church, or it will be starved and die; and without bishops there can be no priests, and, consequently, no sacraments. That also must needs be a supreme order from whence ordination itself proceeds: this enlarged on, with the consequent of this; namely, if sacraments depend on bishops, let them take care that holy materials be conveyed to the people, sanctified by a holy ministry, and ministered by holy persons; &c.

3. The like also is to be said concerning prayer; for the episcopal order is appointed by God to be the great ministers of Christ's priesthood in the intercourse of prayer and blessing. Hence may be considered what a calamity is a vicious prelate to that flock which he is appointed to bless and pray for.

4. All the offices ecclesiastical always were, and ought to be, conducted by the episcopal order, as is evident in the universal doctrine and practice of the primitive church: the consequence of which is no other than the admonition in the text. And, let it be remembered, that nothing can oblige the people to obey their bishops as they ought, unless the latter do to them that duty and charity which God requires: this topic enlarged on.

It may be observed, that the episcopal order is the principle of unity in the church. Several other great advantages of it described: also a description of what is a bishop's right employment; namely, to be busy in the service of souls, to do good in all capacities, to promote all public benefits, to propagate Christ's kingdom, &c.

As long as it was thus done by the primitive bishops, princes and people gave them all honor: this shown. But afterwards, when they fell into secular methods, and made their counsels vain by pride, or dirtied their sentences by money, they then became like other men: and so it will always be, unless bishops be more holy than other men.

Concluding exhortations, on the great duty of bishops, and on the important interests that are entrusted to them: rules given for the direction of their conduct; danger of neglect energetically pointed out.

SERMON IV.

CONSECRATION SERMON,

PREACHED AT DUBLIN.

LUKE, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 42, 43.

And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?

Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.

Τίς ἔστιν ἄρα πιστὸς καὶ φρόνιμος οἰκονόμος.

THESE words are not properly a question, though they seem so; and the particle *τὶς* is not interrogative, but hypothetical, and extends 'who' to 'whosoever;' plainly meaning, that whoever is a steward over Christ's household, of him God requires a great care, because he hath trusted him with a great employment. Every steward *ὃν καθέστηκεν ὁ Κύριος*,—so it is in St. Matthew;* *ὃν καταστήσει ὁ Κύριος*, so it is in my text; every steward whom the Lord hath or shall appoint over the family, to rule it and to feed it, now and in all generations of men, as long as this family shall abide on earth; that is, the Apostles, and they who were to succeed the Apostles in the stewardship, were to be furnished with the same power, and to undertake the same charge, and to give the same strict and severe accounts.

* cap. xxiv. 25.

In these words here is something insinuated, and much expressed.

1. That which is insinuated only is, who these stewards are, whom Christ had, whom Christ would appoint over his family, the church: they are not here named, but we shall find them out by their proper direction and indigitation by and by.

2. But that which is expressed, is the office itself, in a double capacity. 1. In the dignity of it, it is a rule and a government; 'whom the Lord shall make ruler over his household.' 2. In the care and duty of it, which determines the government to be paternal and profitable; it is a rule, but such a rule as shepherds have over their flocks, to lead them to good pastures, and to keep them within their appointed walks, and within their folds: *διδόναι σιτομέτριον*' that is the work, 'to give them a measure and proportion of nourishment:' *τροφὴν ἐν καιρῷ*, so St. Matthew calls it: 'meat in the season;' that which is fit for them, and when it is fit; meat enough, and meat convenient; and both together mean that which the Greek poets call *ἁρμαλιὴν ἔμμηνον*,* "the strong wholesome diet."

3. Lastly: here is the reward of the faithful and wise dispensation. The steward that does so, and continues to do so, till his Lord find him so doing, this man shall be blessed in his deed. 'Blessed is the servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.' Of these in order.

1. Who are these rulers of Christ's family? for though Christ knew it, and therefore needed not to ask; yet we have disputed it so much, and obeyed so little, that we have changed the plain hypothesis into an entangled question. The answer yet is easy as to some part of the inquiry: the Apostles are the first meaning of the text; for they were our fathers in Christ, they begat sons and daughters unto God; and were a spiritual paternity, is evident: we need look no further for spiritual government, because in the paternal rule all power is founded; they begat the family by the power of the word and the life of the Spirit, and they fed this family, and ruled it, by the word of their proper ministry: they had the keys of this house, the

* Hesiod. Ἔργ. 765. Gaisford, p. 57.

steward's ensign, and they had the ruler's place; 'for they sat on twelve thrones, and judged the twelve tribes of Israel.' But of this there is no question.

And as little of another proposition; that this stewardship was to last for ever, for the power of ministering in this office and the office itself were to be perpetual: for the issues and powers of government are more necessary for the perpetuating the church, than for the first planting; and if it was necessary that the Apostles should have a rod and a staff at first, it would be more necessary afterwards, when the family was more numerous, and their first zeal abated, and their native simplicity perverted into arts of hypocrisy and forms of godliness, when 'heresies should arise, and the love of many should wax cold.' The Apostles had also a power of ordination: and that the very power itself does denote, for it makes perpetuity, that could not expire in the days of the Apostles; for by it they themselves propagated a succession. And Christ, having promised his Spirit to abide with his church for ever, and made his Apostles the channels, the ministers and conveyances of it, that it might descend as the inheritance and eternal portion of the family; it cannot be imagined, that when the first ministers were gone, there should not others rise up in the same places, some like to the first, in the same office and ministry of the Spirit. But the thing is plain and evident in the matter of fact also; *Quod in ecclesia nunc geritur, hoc olim fecerunt apostoli*, said St. Cyprian: "What the Apostles did at first, that the church does to this day,"* and shall do so for ever: for when St. Paul had given to the bishop of Ephesus rules of government in this family, he commands that they should be 'observed till the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;'† and therefore these authorities and charges are given to him and to his successors; it is the observation of St. Ambrose on the warranty of that text, and is obvious and undeniable.

Well, then, the Apostles were the first stewards; and this office dies not with them, but must for ever be succeeded in; and now begins the inquiry, Who are the successors of the Apostles? for they are, they must evidently be, the stewards to

* Epist. 73. ad Jub. † 1 Tim. vi. 14.

feed and to rule this family. There are some that say, that all who have any portion of work in the family, all the ministers of the gospel, are these stewards, and so all will be rulers. The presbyters surely; for, say they, presbyter and bishop is the same thing, and have the same name in Scripture, and, therefore, the office cannot be distinguished. To this I shall very briefly say two things, which will quickly clear our way through this bush of thorns.

1. That the word "presbyter" is but an honorable appellative used amongst the Jews, as "alderman" amongst us; but it signifies no order at all, nor was ever used in Scripture to signify any distinct company or order of clergy: and this appears not only by an induction in all the enumerations of the offices ministerial in the New Testament,* where to be a presbyter is never reckoned either as a distinct office, or a distinct order; but by its being indifferently communicated to all the superior clergy, and all the princes of the people.

2. The second thing I intended to say, is this; that although all the superior clergy had not only one, but divers common appellatives, all being called πρεσβύτεροι and διάκονοι, even the apostolate itself being called a deaconship;† yet it is evident, that before the common appellatives were fixed into names of propriety, they were as evidently distinguished in their offices and powers, as they are at this day in their names and titles.

To this purpose St. Paul gave to Titus, the bishop of Crete, a special commission, command, and power, to make ordinations; and in him, and in the person of Timothy, he did erect a court of judicature even over some of the clergy, who yet were called presbyters; 'Against a presbyter receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses:'‡ there is the measure and the warranty of the *audientia episcopalis*, "the bishop's audience court;" and when the accused were found guilty, he gives in charge to proceed to censures: ἔλεγχε ἀποτόμως, and δεῖ ἐπιστομίζειν· 'You must rebuke them sharply, and you must silence them, stop their mouths,'§ that is St. Paul's word; that they may no more scatter their venom in the

* Rom. xii. 6. Eph. iv. 11. 1 Cor. xii 28. † Acts, i. 25.
‡ 1 Tim. v. 19. § Tit. i. 11. ii. 15.

ears and hearts of the people. These bishops were commanded 'to set in order things that were wanting' in the churches, the same with that power of St. Paul;—'Other things will I set in order, when I come,' said he to the Corinthian churches; in which there were many who were called presbyters, who nevertheless, for all that name, had not that power. To the same purpose it is plain in Scripture, that some would have been Apostles that were not; such were those whom the Spirit of God notes in the Revelation;* and some did 'love pre-eminence' that had it not, for so did Diotrephes; and some were judges of questions, and all were not, for therefore they appealed to the Apostles at Jerusalem: and St. Philip, though he was an evangelist, yet he could not give confirmation to the Samaritans whom he had baptised, but the Apostles were sent for; for that was part of the power reserved to the episcopal or apostolic order.

Now, from these premises, the conclusion is plain and easy. 1. Christ left a government in his church, and founded it in the persons of the Apostles. 2. The Apostles received this power for the perpetual use and benefit, for the comfort and edification of the church for ever. 3. The Apostles had this government; but all that were taken into the ministry, and all that were called presbyters, had it not. If, therefore, this government, in which there is so much disparity in the very nature, and exercise, and first original of it, must abide for ever; then so must that disparity. If the apostolate, in the first stabiliment, was this eminency of power, then it must be so; that is, it must be the same in the succession that it was in the foundation. For, after the church is founded on its governors, we are to expect no change of government. If Christ was the author of it, then, as Christ left it, so it must abide for ever: for ever there must be the governing and the governed, the superior and the subordinate, the ordainer and the ordained, the confirmer and the confirmed.

Thus far the way is straight, and the path is plain. The apostles were the stewards and the ordinary rulers of Christ's

* cap. ii. ver. 2.

family, by virtue of the order and office apostolical; and although this be succeeded to for ever, yet no man, for his now or at any time being called a presbyter or elder, can pretend to it; for, besides his being a presbyter, he must be an Apostle too; else, though he be called *in partem sollicitudinis*, and may do the office of assistance and under-stewardship; yet the κῦρος, "the government," and rule of the family, belongs not to him.

But then τίς ἄρα καὶ σήμερον; "who are these stewards and rulers over the household now?" To this the answer is also certain and easy. Christ hath made the same governors to-day as heretofore; "Apostles still." For though the twelve Apostles are dead, yet the apostolical order is not: it is τάξις γεννητική, "a generative order," and begets more Apostles. Now who these *minores Apostoli* are, the successors of the Apostles in that office apostolical and supreme regiment of souls, we are sufficiently taught in holy Scriptures; which when I have clearly shown to you, I shall pass on to some more practical considerations.

I. Therefore, certain and known it is, that Christ appointed two sorts of ecclesiastical persons,—twelve Apostles, and the seventy-two disciples; to these he gave a limited commission; to those a fulness of power; to these a temporary employment; to those a perpetual and everlasting: from these two societies, founded by Christ, the whole church of God derives the two superior orders in the sacred hierarchy; and, as bishops do not claim a divine right but by succession from the Apostles, so the presbyters cannot pretend to have been instituted by Christ, but by claiming a succession to the seventy-two. And then consider the difference, compare the tables, and all the world will see the advantages of argument we have; for, since the seventy-two had nothing but a mission on a temporary errand; and more than that, we hear nothing of them in Scripture; but on the Apostles Christ poured all the ecclesiastical power, and made them the ordinary ministers of that Spirit, which was to abide with the church for ever: the divine institution of bishops, that is, of successors to the Apostles, is much more clear than that Christ appointed presbyters, or successors of the seventy-

two. And yet, if from hence they do not derive it, they can never prove their order to be of divine institution at all, much less to be so alone.

But we may see the very thing itself—the very matter of fact. St. James, the bishop of Jerusalem, is by St. Paul called an Apostle: 'Other Apostles saw I none, save James, the Lord's brother.'* For there were some whom the Scriptures call 'the Apostles of our Lord;' that is, such which Christ made by his word immediately, or by his Spirit extraordinarily; and even into this number and title, Matthias, and St. Paul, and Barnabas, were accounted.† But the church also made Apostles;‡ and these were called by St. Paul, ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν, 'Apostles of the churches;' and particularly Epaphroditus was the 'Apostle of the Philippians;'—"properly so," saith Primasius; and "what is this else but the bishop?" saith Theodoret; for τοὺς νῦν καλουμένους ἐπισκόπους ὠνόμαζον ἀποστόλους, "those who are now called bishops, were then called apostles," saith the same father. The sense and full meaning of which argument is a perfect commentary on that famous prophecy of the church, 'Instead of thy fathers, thou shalt have children, whom thou mayest make princes in all lands;'§ that is, not only the twelve Apostles, our fathers in Christ, who first begat us, were to rule Christ's family, but when they were gone, their children and successors should arise in their stead: *Et nati natorum, et qui nascentur ab illis:* their direct successors to all generations shall be *principes populi*, that is, "rulers and governors of the whole catholic church."—*De prole enim ecclesiæ crevit eadem paternitas, id est, episcopi, quos illa genuit, et patres appellat, et constituit in sedibus patrum*, saith St. Austin: "The children of the church become fathers of the faithful; that is, the church begets bishops, and places them in the seat of their fathers, the first Apostles."

After these plain and evident testimonies of Scripture, it will not be amiss to say, that this great affair, relying not only on the words of the institution, but on matter of fact, passed forth into a demonstration and greatest notoriety by the doctrine and practice of the whole catholic church: for so St. Irenæus,

* Gal. i. 19. † 1 Cor. viii. 23. ‡ Philip. ii. 25.
§ Psalm xlv. 16.

who was one of the most ancient fathers of the church, and might easily make good his affirmative: "We can," says he, "reckon the men, who by the Apostles were appointed bishops in churches, to be their successors unto us; leaving to them the same power and authority which they had."—Thus St. Polycarp was by the Apostles made bishop of Smyrna; St. Clement, bishop of Rome, by St. Peter; "and divers others by the Apostles," saith Tertullian; saying also, that the Asian bishops were consecrated by St. John. And to be short, that bishops are the successors of the Apostles in the stewardship and rule of the church, is expressly taught by St. Cyprian* and St. Jerome,† St. Ambrose and St. Austin,‡ by Euthymius and Pacianus, by St. Gregory and St. John Damascenus, by Clarius à Muscula and St. Sixtus, by Anacletus and St. Isidore; by the Roman council under St. Sylvester, and the council of Carthage; and the διαδοχή, or "succession" of bishops from the Apostles' hands in all the churches apostolical, was as certainly known as in our chronicles we find the succession of our English kings, and one can no more be denied than the other. The conclusion from these premises I give you in the words of St. Cyprian: *Cogitent diaconi, quod apostolos, id est, episcopos, Dominus ipse elegerit:* "Let the ministers know, that Apostles, that is, the bishops, were chosen by our blessed Lord himself:"§ and this was so evident, and so believed, that St. Austin affirms it with a *Nemo ignorat*, "No man is so ignorant but he knows this, that our blessed Saviour appointed bishops over churches."‖

Indeed the Gnostics spake evil of this order; for they are noted by three Apostles, St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. Jude, to be 'despisers of government, and to speak evil of dignities;' and what government it was they did so despise, we may understand by the words of St. Jude; they were ἐν τῇ ἀντιλογίᾳ τοῦ Κορὲ, 'in the contradiction or gainsaying of Corah,' who with his company rose up against Aaron the high priest; and excepting these, who were the vilest of men, no man, within the first three hundred years after Christ, opposed episcopacy.

* In 1 Cor. xii. † In Ps. xliv. ‡ Epist. 1. Sempronianum.
§ Epist. 65. ad Rogat. ‖ Quæst. V. et N. T. q. 107.

But when Constantine received the church into his arms, he found it universally governed by bishops; and, therefore, no wise or good man professing to be a Christian, that is, to believe the holy catholic church, can be content to quit the apostolical government (that by which the whole family of God was fed, and taught, and ruled), and beget to himself new fathers and new Apostles, who, by wanting succession from the Apostles of our Lord, have no ecclesiastical and derivative communion with these fountains of our Saviour.

If ever Vincentius Lirinensis's rule could be used in any question, it is in this: *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus;* that bishops are the successors of the Apostles in this stewardship; and that they did always rule the family, was taught and acknowleged "always and every where, and by all men" that were of the church of God: and if these evidences be not sufficient to convince modest and sober persons in this question, we shall find our faith to fail in many other articles; of which we yet are very confident: for the observation of the Lord's day, the consecration of the holy eucharist by priests, the baptizing infants, the communicating of women, and the very canon of the Scripture itself, rely but on the same probation; and, therefore, the denying of articles thus proved, is a way, I do not say, to bring in all sects and heresies,—that is but little;—but a plain path and inlet to atheism and irreligion; for by this means it will not only be impossible to agree concerning the meaning of Scripture, but the Scripture itself, and all the records of religion, will become useless, and of no efficacy or persuasion.

I am entered into a sea of matter; but I will break it off abruptly, and sum up this inquiry with the words of the council of Chalcedon, which is one of the four generals, by our laws made the measures of judging heresies: Ἐπίσκοπον εἰς πρεσβυτέρου βαθμὸν ἀναφέρειν, ἱεροσυλία ἐστίν, "It is sacrilege to bring back a bishop to the degree and order of a presbyter." It is indeed a rifling the order, and entangling the gifts, and confounding the method of the Holy Ghost; it is a dishonoring them whom God would honor, and a robbing them of those spiritual eminences with which the Spirit of God does anoint the consecrated heads of bishops. And I shall say one thing

more, which indeed is a great truth, that the diminution of episcopacy was first introduced by popery; and the popes of Rome, by communicating to abbots, and other mere priests, special graces to exercise some essential offices of episcopacy, have made this sacred order to be cheap, and apt to be invaded. But then add this: if Simon Magus was in so damnable a condition for offering to buy the gifts and powers of the apostolical order, what shall we think of them that snatch them away, and pretend to wear them, whether the Apostles and their successors will or no? This is ψεύσασθαι τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα, "to belie the Holy Ghost;" that is the least of it: it is rapine and sacrilege, besides the heresy and schism, and the spiritual lie. For the government episcopal, as it was exemplified in the synagogue, and practised by the same measures in the temple, so it was transcribed by the eternal Son of God, who translated it into a gospel ordinance: it was sanctified by the Holy Spirit, who named some of the persons, and gave to them all power and graces from above: it was subjected in the Apostles first, and by them transmitted to a distinct order of ecclesiastics: it was received into all churches, consigned in the records of the Holy Scriptures, preached by the universal voice of all the Christian world, delivered by notorious and uninterrupted practice, and derived to further and unquestionable issue by perpetual succession.

I have done with the hardest part of the text, by finding out the persons entrusted, "the stewards of Christ's family;" which though Christ only intimated in this place, yet he plainly enough manifested in others: the Apostles, and their successors the bishops, are the men entrusted with this great charge; God grant they may all discharge it well. And so I pass from the officers to a consideration of the office itself, in the next words; 'whom the Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their meat in due season.'

II. The office itself is the stewardship, that is episcopacy, the office of the bishop: the name signifies an office of the ruler indefinitely, but the word was chosen, and by the church appropriated to those whom it now signifies, both because the word itself is a monition of duty, and also because the faithful were used to it in the days of Moses and the prophets. The

word is in the prophecy of the church: 'I will give to thee princes in peace, καὶ ἐπισκόπους ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ, and bishops in righteousness;'* on which place St. Jerome says, *Principes ecclesiæ vocat futuros episcopos;*† "The Spirit of God calls them who were to be Christian bishops, *principes*, or chief rulers," and this was no new thing; for the chief of the priests who were set over the rest, are called bishops by all the Hellenist Jews. Thus Joel is called ἐπίσκοπος ἐπ' αὐτοὺς, 'the bishop over the priests;'‡ and the son of Bani, ἐπίσκοπος Λευιτῶν, 'the bishop and visitor over the Levites;' and we find at the purging of the land from idolatry, the high priest placed ἐπισκόπους εἰς οἶκον Κυρίου, 'bishops over the house of God.'§ Nay, it was the appellative of the high priest himself, ἐπίσκοπος Ἐλεάζαρ, 'bishop Eleazar,'‖ the son of Aaron the priest, to whom is committed the care of lamps, and the daily sacrifice, and the holy unction.

Now this word the church retained, choosing the same name to her superior ministers, because of the likeness of the ecclesiastical government between the Old and New Testament.

For Christ made no change but what was necessary: baptism was a rite among the Jews, and the Lord's Supper was but the *postcenium* of the Hebrews changed into a mystery, from a type to a more real exhibition; and the Lord's Prayer was a collection of the most eminent devotions of the prophets and holy men before Christ, who prayed by the same Spirit; and the censures ecclesiastical were but an imitation of the proceedings of the Judaical tribunals; and the whole religion was but the law of Moses drawn out of its veil into clarity and manifestation; and to conclude in order to the present affair, the government which Christ left, was the same as he found it; for what Aaron and his sons, and the Levites, were, in the temple,—that bishops, priests, and deacons are in the church: it is affirmed by St. Jerome more than once; and the use he makes of it is this, *Esto subjectus pontifici tuo, et quasi animæ parentem suscipe;* "Obey your bishop, and receive him as the

* Isa. lx. 17. † Hunc locum etiam citat. S. Clemens, Ep. ad Cor.
‡ Neh. xi. 9. § 2 Kings, xi. 18. ‖ Numb. iv. 16.

nursing-father of your soul."* But above all, this appellation is made honorable by being taken by our blessed Lord himself: for he is called in Scripture the 'great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.'

But our inquiry is not after the name, but the office, and the dignity and duty of it: *Ecclesiæ gubernandæ sublimis ac divina potestas*, so St. Cyprian calls it; "a high and a divine power from God of governing the church;"—*rem magnam et pretiosam in conspectu Domini*, so St. Cyril; "a great and precious thing in the sight of God;"—*τῶν ἐν ἀνθρώποις εὐκταίων ὅρον*, by Isidore Pelusiot; "the utmost limit of what is desirable among men:"—but the account on which it is so desirable, is the same also that makes it formidable. They who have tried it, and did it conscientiously, have found the burden so great, as to make them stoop with care and labor; and they who do it ignorantly or carelessly, will find it will break their bones: for the bishop's office is all that duty which can be signified by those excellent words of St. Cyprian: "He is a bishop or overseer of the brotherhood, the ruler of the people; the shepherd of the flock, the governor of the church, the minister of Christ, and the priest of God." These are great titles, and yet less than what is said of them in Scripture, which calls them 'salt of the earth,—lights on a candlestick,—stars and angels,—fathers of our faith,—ambassadors of God,—dispensers of the mysteries of God,—the Apostles of the churches,—and the glory of Christ:'—but then they are great burdens too; for the bishop is *πεπιστευμένος τὸν λαὸν τοῦ Κυρίου*, "entrusted with the Lord's people;" that is a great charge, but there is a worse matter that follows, *καὶ τὸν ὑπὲρ τῶν ψυχῶν αὐτῶν λόγον ἀπαιτηθησόμενος*· the bishop is he, of whom God will require 'an account for all their souls:' they are the words of St. Paul,† and transcribed into the fortieth canon of the Apostles, and the twenty-fourth canon of the council of Antioch.

And now I hope the envy is taken off; for the honor does not pay for the burden; and we can no sooner consider episcopacy in its dignity, as it is a rule; but the very nature of that rule does imply so severe a duty, that as the load of it is

* Epist. 2. ad Nepot. Epist. ad Evagrium. † Heb. xiii. 17.

almost insufferable, so the event of it is very formidable, if we take not great care. For this stewardship is κυριότης καὶ διακονία, "a principality and a ministry," So it was in Christ; he is Lord of all, and yet he was the Servant of all: so it was in the Apostles: it was κλῆρος διακονίας καὶ ἀποστολῆς, "their lot was to be Apostles, and yet to serve and minister;"* and it is remarkable, that, in Isaiah, the seventy use the word ἐπίσκοπος, or bishop;† but there they use it for the Hebrew word *neckosheth*, which the Greeks usually render by ἐργοδιώκτης, φορολόγος, πράκτωρ, and the interlineary translation by *exactores*. Bishops are only God's ministers and tribute-gatherers, requiring and overseeing them that they do their duty; and, therefore, here the case is so, and the burden so great, and the dignity so allayed, that the envious man hath no reason to be troubled that his brother hath so great a load, nor the proud man plainly to be delighted with so honorable a danger. It is indeed a rule, but it is paternal; it is a government, but it must be neither ἀναγκαστικὸν nor αἰσχροκερδὲς, it is neither 'a power to constrain,' nor 'a commission to get wealth,'‡ for it must be without necessity, and not for filthy lucre sake; but it is a rule, ὡς διακονοῦντος, so St. Luke, 'as of him that ministers;'§ ὡς πάντων δούλου, so St. Mark, 'as of him that is servant of all;'‖ ὡς πόδας νίπτοντος, so St. John;¶ such a principality as he hath 'that washes the feet' of the weary traveller; or if you please, take it in the words of our blessed Lord himself, that 'he that will be chief among you, let him be your minister;' meaning, that if under Christ's kingdom you desire rule, possibly you may have it; but all that rule under him, are servants to them that are ruled; and, therefore, you get nothing by it, but a great labor and a busy employment, a careful life, and a necessity of making severe accounts. But all this is nothing but the general measures; I cannot be useful or understood unless I be more particular. The particulars we shall best enumerate by recounting those great conjugations of worthy offices and actions, by which Christian bishops have blessed and built up Christendom; for because we must be

* Acts, i. 25. † Isaiah, lx. 17. ‡ 1 Pet. v. 2.
§ Luke, xxii. 27. ‖ Mark, x. 43. ¶ John, xiii. 13.

followers of them, as they were of Christ, the recounting what they did worthily in their generations, will not only demonstrate how useful, how profitable, how necessary episcopacy is to the Christian church, but it will, at the same time, teach us our duty; by what services we are to benefit the church, in what works we are to be employed, and how to give an account of our stewardship with joy.

1. The Christian church was founded by bishops, not only because the Apostles, who were bishops, were the first preachers of the gospel, and planters of churches,—but because the apostolical men, whom the Apostles used in planting and disseminating religion, were, by all antiquity, affirmed to have been diocesan bishops; insomuch that, as St. Epiphanius* witnesses, there were, at the first disseminations of the faith of Christ, many churches, which had in them no other clergy, but a bishop and his deacons; and the presbyters were brought in afterwards, as the harvest grew greater: but the bishops' names are known, they are 'recorded in the book of life,' and 'their praise is in the gospel;' such were Timothy and Titus, Clemens and Linus, Marcus and Dionysius, Onesimus and Caius, Epaphroditus and St. James, our Lord's brother, Evodius and Simeon; all which, if there be any faith in Christians that gave their lives for a testimony to the faith, and any truth in their stories; and unless we, who believe Thucydides and Plutarch, Livy and Tacitus, think that all church story is a perpetual romance, and that all the brave men, the martyrs and the doctors of the primitive church, did conspire, as one man, to abuse all Christendom for ever; I say, unless all these impossible suppositions be admitted,—all these, whom I have now reckoned, were bishops fixed in several churches, and had dioceses for their charges.

The consequent of this consideration is this: If bishops were those on whose ministry Christ founded and built his church, let us consider what great wisdom is required of them that seem to be pillars: the stewards of Christ's family must be wise; that Christ requires: and if the order be necessary to the church, wisdom cannot but be necessary to the order; for it is

* lib. iii. tit. 1.

a shame, if they, who, by their office, are fathers in Christ, shall, by their unskilfulness, be but babes themselves, understanding not the secrets of religion, the mysteries of godliness, the perfections of the evangelical law, all the advantages and disadvantages in the spiritual life. A bishop must be exercised in godliness, a man of great experience in the secret conduct of souls, not satisfied with an ordinary skill in making homilies to the people, and speaking common exhortations in ordinary cases; but ready to answer in all secret inquiries, and able to convince the gainsayers, and to speak wisdom amongst them that are perfect.

If the first bishops laid the foundation, their successors must not only preserve whatsoever is fundamental, but build up the church in a most holy faith, taking care that no heresy sap the foundation, and that no hay or rotten wood be built on it; and above all things, that a most holy life be superstructed on a holy and unreprovable faith. So the Apostles laid the foundation, and built the walls of the church, and their successors must raise up the roof as high as heaven. For let us talk and dispute eternally, we shall never compose the controversies in religion, and establish truth on unalterable foundations, as long as men handle the word of God deceitfully, that is, with designs and little artifices, and secular partialities; and they will for ever do so, as long as they are proud or covetous. It is not the difficulty of our questions, or the subtlety of our adversaries, that makes disputes interminable; but we shall never cure the itch of disputing, or establish unity, unless we apply ourselves to humility and contempt of riches. If we will be contending, let us contend like the olive and the vine, who shall produce best and most fruit; not like the aspen and the elm, which shall make most noise in a wind. And all other methods are a beginning at a wrong end. And as for the people, the way to make them conformable to the wise and holy rules of faith and government, is by reducing them to live good lives. When the children of Israel gave themselves to gluttony, and drunkenness, and filthy lusts, they quickly fell into abominable idolatries; and St. Paul says, 'that men make shipwreck of their faith by putting away a good conscience:'* for the mystery of faith

* 1 Tim. i. 19.

is best preserved ἐν καθαρᾷ συνειδήσει, 'in a pure conscience,' saith the same Apostle:* secure but that, and we shall quickly end our disputes, and have an obedient and conformable people; but else never.

2. As bishops were the first fathers of churches, and gave them being, so they preserve them in being; for without sacraments there is no church, or it will be starved, and die; and without bishops there can be no priests, and consequently no sacraments; and that must needs be a supreme order, from whence ordination itself proceeds. For it is evident and notorious, that in Scripture there is no record of ordination, but an apostolical hand was in it; one of the ἄνδρες ἡγούμενοι, one of the chief, one of the superior and ruling clergy; and it is as certain in the descending ages of the church, the bishop always had that power; it was never denied to him, and it was never imputed to presbyters: and St. Jerome himself, when, out of his anger against John, bishop of Jerusalem, he endeavored to equal the presbyter with the bishop, though in very many places he spake otherwise, yet even then also, and in that heat, he excepted ordination, acknowleging that to be the bishop's peculiar. And, therefore, they who go about to extinguish episcopacy, do as Julian did; they destroy the presbytery, and starve the flock, and take away their shepherds, and dispark their pastures, and tempt God's providence to extraordinaries, and put the people to hard shifts, and turn the channels of salvation quite another way, and leave the church to a perpetual uncertainty, whether she be alive or dead, and the people destitute of the life of their souls, and their daily bread, and their spiritual comforts, and holy blessings.

The consequent of this is: if sacraments depend on bishops, then let us take care that we convey to the people holy and pure materials, sanctified with a holy ministry, and ministered by holy persons: for although it be true, that the efficacy of the sacraments does not depend wholly on the worthiness of him that ministers; yet it is as true, that it does not wholly rely on the worthiness of the receiver; but both together, relying on the goodness of God, produce all those blessings which are designed. The minister hath an influence into the effect, and

* 1 Tim. iii. 19.

does very much towards it; and if there be a failure there, it is a defect in one of the concurring causes; and, therefore, an unholy bishop is a great diminution to the people's blessing. St. Jerome presses this severely: *Impie faciunt*, &c. "They do wickedly who affirm, that the holy eucharist is consecrated by the words (alone) and solemn prayer of the consecrator, and not also by his life and holiness:"* and, therefore, St. Cyprian affirms, that "none but holy and upright men are to be chosen, who, offering their sacrifices worthily to God, may be heard in their prayers for the Lord's people:"† but for others, *Sacrificia eorum, panis luctus*, saith the prophet Hosea: 'Their sacrifices are like the bread of sorrow; whoever eats thereof, shall be defiled.'

This discourse is not mine, but St. Cyprian's; and although his words are not to be understood dogmatically, but in the case of duty and caution, yet we may lay our hands on our hearts, and consider how we shall give an account of our stewardship, if we shall offer to the people the bread of God with impure hands: it is of itself a pure nourishment; but if it passes through an unclean vessel, it loses much of its excellency.

3. The like also is to be said concerning prayer; for the episcopal order is appointed by God to be the great ministers of Christ's priesthood, that is, to stand between Christ and the people in the intercourse of prayer and blessing. 'We will give ourselves continually to prayer,' said the Apostles: that was the one-half of their employment;—and indeed a bishop should spend very much of his time in holy prayer, and in diverting God's judgments, and procuring blessings to the people; for in all times, the chief of the religion was ever the chief minister of blessing. Thus Abraham blessed Abimelech, and Melchisedek blessed Abraham, and Aaron blessed the people; and 'without all controversy,' saith the Apostle, 'the less is blessed of the greater.' But then 'we know that God heareth not sinners;' and it must be 'the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man that shall prevail.'

And, therefore, we may easily consider that a vicious prelate is a great calamity to that flock, which he is appointed to bless

* In Zeph. † Lib. i. Ep. 4.

and pray for. How shall he reconcile the penitents, who is himself at enmity with God? How shall the Holy Spirit of God descend on the symbols at his prayer, who does perpetually grieve him, and quench his holy fires, and drive him quite away? How shall he that hath not tasted of the Spirit by contemplation, stir up others to earnest desires of celestial things? Or what good shall the people receive, when the bishop lays on their head a covetous or a cruel, an unjust or an impure hand? But, therefore, that I may use the words of St. Jerome, *Cum ab episcopo gratia in populum transfundatur, et mundi totius et ecclesiæ totius condimentum sit episcopus,** &c. Since it is intended that from the bishop grace should be diffused amongst all the people, there is not in the world a greater indecency than a holy office ministered by an unholy person; and no greater injury to the people, than that, of the blessings which God sends to them by the ministries evangelical, they should be cheated and defrauded by a wicked steward. And, therefore, it was an excellent prayer, which, to this very purpose, was, by the son of Sirach, made in behalf of the high priests, the sons of Aaron: 'God give you wisdom in your heart, to judge his people in righteousness, that their good things be not abolished, and that their glory may endure for ever.'†

4. All the offices ecclesiastical always were, and ought to be, conducted by the episcopal order, as is evident in the universal doctrine and practice of the primitive church: *Οἱ πρεσβύτεροι καὶ διάκονοι ἄνευ γνώμης τοῦ ἐπισκόπου μηδὲν ἐπιτελείτωσαν.* It is the fortieth canon of the Apostles, "Let the presbyters and deacons do nothing without leave of the bishop;"‡ but that case is known.

The consequent of this consideration is no other than the admonition in my text; 'We are stewards of the manifold grace of God,' and dispensers of the mysteries of the kingdom; and 'it is required of stewards that they be found faithful;'§ 'that we preach the word of God in season and out of season,—that we rebuke and exhort, admonish and correct:'—for these, God calls *pastores secundum cor meum*, 'pastors according to his

* Dial. adv. Lucifer.

† Ecclus. xlv. 26.

‡ 24 C. Concil. Antioch.

§ 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2, 3.

own heart, which feed the people with knowlege and understanding;'* but they must also 'comfort the afflicted, and bind up the broken heart;' minister the sacraments with great diligence, and righteous measures, and abundant charity; always having in mind those passionate words of Christ to St. Peter, 'If thou lovest me, feed my sheep; if thou hast any love to me, feed my lambs.'

And let us remember this also, that nothing can enforce the people to obey their bishops as they ought, but our doing that duty and charity to them which God requires. There is reason in these words of St. Chrysostom: "It is necessary that the church should adhere to their bishop, as the body to the head, as plants to their roots, as rivers to their springs, as children to their fathers, as disciples to their masters." These similitudes express not only the relation and dependence, but they tell us the reason of the duty: the head gives light and reason to conduct the body; the roots give nourishment to the plants; and the springs, perpetual emanation of waters to the channels: fathers teach and feed their children; and disciples receive wise instructions from their masters: and if we be all this to the people, they will be all that to us; and wisdom will compel them to submit, and our humility will teach them obedience, and our charity will invite their compliance; our good example will provoke them to good works, and our meekness will melt them into softness and flexibility; for all the Lord's people are *populus voluntarius*, 'a free and willing people;' and we, who cannot compel their bodies, must thus constrain their souls, by inviting their wills, by convincing their understandings, by the beauty of fair example, the efficacy of holiness, and the demonstrations of the Spirit.

This is *experimentum ejus qui in nobis loquitur, Christus*, "the experiment of Christ that speaketh in us;" for to this purpose those are excellent words which St. Paul spake: 'Remember them who have the rule over you; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.'† There lies the demonstration; and those prelates who teach good life, whose sermons are the measures of Christ, and whose life is a copy of

* Jer. iii. 15. † Heb. xiii. 7.

their sermons, these must be followed, and surely these will; for these are burning and shining lights: but if we hold forth false fires, and by the amusement of evil examples, call the vessels that sail on a dangerous sea, to come on a rock or an iron shore instead of a safe harbor, we cause them to make shipwreck of their precious faith, and to perish in the deceitful and unstable waters. *Vox operum fortius sonat quam verborum:* "a good life is the strongest argument that your faith is good," and a gentle voice will be sooner entertained than a voice of thunder; but the greatest eloquence in the world is a meek spirit and a liberal hand; these are the two pastoral staves the prophet speaks of, *nognam et hovelim*, 'beauty and bands;'* he that hath the staff of the beauty of holiness, the ornament of fair example, he hath also the staff of bands: *atque in funiculis Adam trahet eos, in vinculis charitatis*, as the prophet Hosea's expression is, 'he shall draw the people after him by the cords of a man, by the bands of a holy charity.'† But if, against all these demonstrations, any man will be refractory, we have, instead of a staff, an apostolical rod, which is the last and latest remedy, and either brings to repentance, or consigns to ruin and reprobation.

If there were any time remaining, I could reckon that the episcopal order is the principle of unity in the church; and we see it is so, by the innumerable sects that sprang up, when episcopacy was persecuted. I could add, how that bishops were the cause that St. John wrote his Gospel; that the Christian faith was, for three hundred years together, bravely defended by the sufferings, the prisons and flames, the life and the death of bishops, as the principal combatants; that the fathers of the church, whose writings are held in so great veneration in all the Christian world, were almost all of them bishops. I could add, that the reformation of religion in England was principally by the preachings and the disputings, the writings and the martyrdom of bishops; that bishops have ever since been the greatest defensatives against popery; that England and Ireland were governed by bishops ever since they were Christian, and under their conduct have, for so many ages, en-

* Zech. xi. 7. † cap. xi. 4.

joyed all the blessings of the gospel. I could add also, that episcopacy is the greatest stabilment of monarchy; but of this we are convinced by a sad and too dear-bought experience: I could, therefore, instead of it, say, that episcopacy is the great ornament of religion; that as it rescues the clergy from contempt, so it is the greatest preservative of the people's liberty from ecclesiastic tyranny on one hand (the gentry being little better than servants, while they live under the presbytery), and anarchy and licentiousness on the other; that it endears obedience, and is subject to the laws of princes, and is wholly ordained for the good of mankind, and the benefit of souls. But I cannot stay to number all the blessings which have entered into the world at this door: I only remark these, because they describe unto us the bishop's employment, which is, to be busy in the service of souls,—to do good in all capacities,—to serve every man's need,—to promote all public benefits,—to cement governments,—to establish peace,—to propagate the kingdom of Christ,—to do hurt to no man,—to do good to every man; —that is, so to minister, that religion and charity, public peace and private blessings, may be in their exaltation.

As long as it was thus done by the primitive bishops, the princes and the people gave them all honor; insomuch, that by a decree of Constantine the Great, the bishop had power given him to retract the sentences made by the presidents of provinces; and we find, in the acts of St. Nicholas, that he rescued some innocent persons from death, when the executioner was ready to strike the fatal blow; which thing, even when it fell into inconvenience, was indeed forbidden by Arcadius and Honorius; but the confidence and honor was only changed, it was not taken away; for the condemned had leave to appeal to the *Audientia Episcopalis*, to "the Bishop's Court." This was not any right which the bishops could challenge, but a reward of their piety; and so long as the holy office was holily administered, the world found so much comfort and security, so much justice and mercy, so many temporal and spiritual blessings, consequent to the ministries of that order, that, as the Galatians to St. Paul, 'men have plucked out their eyes' to do them service, and to do them honor. For then episcopacy did that good that God intended by it; it was a spiritual

government, by spiritual persons, for spiritual ends. Then the princes and the people gave them honors, because they deserved, and sought them not; then they gave them wealth, because they would dispend it wisely, frugally, and charitably; then they gave them power, because it was sure to be used for the defence of the innocent, for the relief of the oppressed, for the punishment of evil-doers, and the reward of the virtuous. Then they desired to be judged by them, because their audiences, or courts, did ἡσυχάζειν τὸ βαρβαρικὸν, "they appeased all furious sentences," and taught gentle principles, and gave merciful measures, and in their courts were all equity and piety, and Christian determinations.

But afterwards, when they did fall εἰς δυναστείαν, "into secular methods," and made their counsels vain by pride, and dirtied their sentences with money, then they became like other men; and so it will be, unless the bishops be more holy than other men: but when our sanctity and severity shall be as eminent as the calling is, then we shall be called to councils, and sit in public meetings, and bring comfort to private families, and rule in the hearts of men by a *jus relationis*, such as was between the Roman emperors and the senate; they courted one another into power, and, in giving honor, strove to outdo each other; for from an humble wise man no man will snatch an employment that is honorable; but from the proud and from the covetous every man endeavors to wrest it, and thinks it lawful prize.

My time is now done; and, therefore, I cannot speak to the third part of my text, the reward of the good steward and of the bad; I shall only mention it to you in a short exhortation, and so conclude. In the primitive church, a bishop was never admitted to public penance; not only because in them every crime is ten, and he that could discern a public shame, could not deserve a public honor; nor yet only because every such punishment was scandalous, and did more evil by the example of the crime, than it could do good by the example of the punishment; but also because no spiritual power is higher than the episcopal, and therefore they were to be referred to the Divine judgment, which was likely to fall on them very heavily: διχοτομήσει ἄχρηστον ὁ Κύριος, 'the Lord will cut the evil

stewards asunder;' he will suffer schisms and divisions to enter in on us, and that will sadly cut us asunder; but the evil also shall fall on their persons, like the punishment of quartering traitors, ἵνα καί σε διαμελεῖσι ταμήσῃ, punishment with the circumstances of detestation and exemplarity. Consider, therefore, what is your great duty. Consider what is your great danger. The lines of duty I have already described; only remember how dear and precious souls are to God, since for their salvation Christ gave his blood, and therefore will not easily lose them, whom, though they had sinned against him, yet he so highly valued: remember that you are Christ's deputies in the care of souls, and that you succeed in the place of the Apostles. *Non est facile stare loco Pauli, et tenere gradum Petri:* you have undertaken the work of St. Paul, and the office of St. Peter; and what, think you, on this account will be required of us? St. Jerome expresses it thus: "The wisdom and skill of a bishop ought to be so great, that his countenance, his gesture, his motion, every thing should be vocal, *ut quicquid agit, quicquid loquitur, doctrina sit apostolorum:* that whatever he does or speaks, be doctrine apostolical." The ancient fathers had a pious opinion, that besides the angel-guardian which is appointed to the guard of every man, there is to every bishop a second angel appointed to him at the consecration; and to this Origen alludes, saying that every bishopric hath two angels, the one visible and the other invisible. This is a great matter, and shows what a precious thing that order and those persons are in the eyes of God; but then this also means, that we should lead angelic lives, which the church rarely well expresses by saying, that episcopal dignity is the ecclesiastic state of perfection, and supposes the persons to be so far advanced in holiness, as to be in the state of confirmation in grace. But I shall say nothing of these things, because it may be they press too hard; but the use I shall make of it, on occasion of the reward of the good and bad steward, is to remind you of your great danger. For if it be required of bishops to be so wise and so holy, so industrious and so careful, so busy and so good, up to the height of best examples; if they be anointed of the Lord, and are the husbands of the churches; if they be the shepherds of the flock, and stewards of the house-

hold; it is very fit they consider their danger, that they may be careful to do their duty. St. Bernard considers it well in his epistle to Henry, archbishop of Sens:—If I, lying in my cell, and smoking under a bushel, not shining, yet cannot avoid the breath of the winds, but that my light is almost blown out; what will become of my candle, if it were placed on a candlestick, and set on a hill? I am to look to myself alone, and provide for my own salvation; and yet I offend myself, I am weary of myself, I am my own scandal and my own danger; my own eye, and mine own belly, and my own appetite, find me work enough; and therefore God help them, who, beside themselves, are answerable for many others. Jacob kept the sheep of Laban, and we keep the sheep of Christ; and Jacob was to answer for every sheep that was stolen, and every lamb that was torn by the wild beast; and so shall we too, if by our fault one of Christ's sheep perish; and yet it may be, there are one hundred thousand souls committed to the care and conduct of some one shepherd, who yet will find his own soul work enough for all his care and watchfulness. If any man should desire me to carry a frigate into the Indies, in which one hundred men were embarked, I were a madman to undertake the charge without proportionable skill; and, therefore, when there is more danger, and more souls, and rougher seas, and more secret rocks, and horrible storms, and the shipwreck is an eternal loss, the matter will then require great consideration in the undertaking, and greatest care in the conduct.

On this account, we find many brave persons, in the first and in the middle ages of the church, with great resolution refusing episcopacy. I will not speak of those, who, for fear of martyrdom, declined it, but those, who, for fear of damnation, did refuse. St. Bernard was by three rich cities severally called to be their bishop, and by two to be their archbishop, and he refused them; St. Dominicus refused four successively; St. Thomas Aquinas refused the archbishopric of Naples; and Vincentius Ferrarius would not accept of Valentia or Ilerda; and Bernardinus Senensis refused the bishopries of Sens, Urbin, and Ferrara. They had reason; and yet, if they had done amiss in that office which they declined, it had been something more excusable; but if they that seek it, be as careless in the

office as they are greedy of the honor, that will be found intolerable. *Electus episcopus ambulat in disco, recusans volvitur in area*, said the hermit in St. Jerome; "The bishop walks on round and trundling-stones; but he that refuses it, stands on a floor." But I shall say no more of it; because I suppose you have read it, and considered it, in St. Chrysostom's six books, *de Sacerdotio;* in the Apologetic of St. Gregory of Nazianzus; in the pastoral of St. Gregory of Rome; in St. Dionysius's eighth epistle to Demophilus; in the letters of Epiphanius to St. Jerome; in St. Austin's epistle to bishop Valerius; in St. Bernard's life of St. Malcahy; in St. Jerome's one hundred and thirty-eighth epistle to Fabiola. These things, I am sure, you could not read without trembling; and certainly, if it can belong to any Christian, then—'work out your salvation with fear and trembling'—that is the bishop's burden. For the bishop is like a man that is surety for his friend; he is bound for many, and for great sums; what is to be done in this case, Solomon's answer is the way: 'Do this now, my son, deliver thyself, make sure thy friend, give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eye-lids:'* that is, be sedulous to discharge thy trust, to perform thy charge; be zealous for souls, and careless of money: and remember this, that even in Christ's family there was one sad example of an apostate Apostle; and he fell into that fearful estate merely by the desire and greediness of money. Be warm in zeal, and indifferent in thy temporalities: for he that is zealous in temporals, and cold in the spiritual; he that doth the accessories of his calling by himself, and the principal by his deputies; he that is present at the feast of sheep-shearing, and puts others to feed the flock; hath no sign at all on him of a good shepherd. 'It is not fit for us to leave the word of God, and to serve tables,' said the Apostles. And if it be a less worthy office to serve the tables even of the poor, to the diminution of our care in the dispensation of God's word,—it must needs be an unworthy employment to leave the word of God, and to attend the rich and superfluous furniture of our own tables. Remember the quality of your charges: *Civitas est, vigilate ad custodiam et concordiam; sponsa est,*

* Prov. vi. 3, 4.

*studete amari; oves sunt, intendite pastui:** "The church is a spouse;" the universal church is Christ's spouse, but your own diocese is yours; "behave yourselves, so that ye be beloved. Your people are as sheep," and they must be fed, and guided, and preserved, and healed, and brought home. "The church is a city," and you are the watchmen; "take care that the city be kept at unity in itself;" be sure to make peace amongst your people; suffer no hatreds, no quarrels, no suits at law amongst the citizens, which you can avoid; make peace in your dioceses by all the ways of prudence, piety, and authority, that you can; and let not your own corrections of criminals be to any purpose but for their amendment, for the cure of offenders as long as there is a hope, and for the security of those who are sound and whole. Preach often, and pray continually; let your discipline be with charity, and your censures slow; let not excommunications pass for trifles, and drive not away the fly from your brother's forehead with a hatchet; give counsel frequently, and dispensations seldom, but never without necessity or charity; let every place in your diocese say, *Invenerunt me vigiles*, "The watchmen have found me out," *hassovelim;* they that walk the city round have sought me out, and found me. Let every one of us, as St. Paul's expression is,† 'show himself a workman that shall not be ashamed;' *operarium inconfusibilem*, mark that; 'such a laborer as shall not be put to shame' for his illness or his unskilfulness, his falseness and unfaithfulness, in that day when the great Bishop of souls shall make his last and dreadful visitation; for, be sure, there is not a carcass nor a skin, not a lock of wool nor a drop of milk, of the whole flock, but God shall for it call the idle shepherd to a severe account. And how, think you, will his anger burn, when he shall see so many goats standing at his left hand, and so few sheep at his right? and, on inquiry, shall find that his ministering shepherds were wolves in sheep's clothing? and, that, by their ill example or pernicious doctrines, their care of money and carelessness of their flocks, so many souls perish, who, if they had been carefully and tenderly, wisely and conscientiously handled, might have shined as bright as angels?

* D. Bernard. ad Henr. Episc. Senensem. † 2 Tim. ii. 15.

And it is a sad consideration to remember, how many souls are pitifully handled in this world, and carelessly dismissed out of this world; they are left to live at their own rate, and when they are sick, they are bidden to be of good comfort, and then all is well; who, when they are dead, find themselves cheated of their precious and invaluable eternity. Oh, how will those souls, in their eternal prisons, for ever curse those evil and false guides! And how will those evil guides themselves abide in judgment, when the angels of wrath snatch their abused people into everlasting torments! For will God bless them, or pardon them, by whom so many souls perish? Shall they reign with Christ, who evacuate the death of Christ, and make it useless to dear souls? Shall they partake of Christ's glories, by whom it comes to pass that there is less joy in heaven itself, even because sinners are not converted, and God is not glorified, and the people is not instructed, and the kingdom of God is not filled? Oh no; the curses of a false prophet will fall on them, and the reward of the evil steward will be their portion; and they who destroyed the sheep, or neglected them, shall have their portion with goats for ever and ever, in everlasting burnings, in which it is impossible for a man to dwell.

Can any thing be beyond this? beyond damnation? Surely a man would think not: and yet I remember a severe saying of St. Gregory, *Scire debent prælati, quod tot mortibus digni sunt, quot perditionis exempla ad subditos extenderunt:* "One damnation is not enough for an evil shepherd; but for every soul who dies by his evil example or pernicious carelessness, he deserves a new death, a new damnation."—Let us, therefore, be wise and faithful, walk warily, and watch carefully, and rule diligently, and pray assiduously; for God is more propense to rewards than to punishments; and the good steward, that is wise and faithful in his dispensation, shall be greatly blessed. But how? 'He shall be made ruler over the household.' What is that? for he is so already. True: but he shall be much more: *Ex dispensatore faciet procuratorem;* God will treat him, as Joseph was treated by his master; "he was first a steward, and then a procurator;" one that ruled his goods without account, and without restraint. Our ministry

shall pass into empire, our labor into rest, our watchfulness into fruition, and our bishopric to a kingdom. In the mean time, our bishoprics are a great and weighty care, and, in a spiritual sense, our dominion is founded in grace, and our rule is in the hearts of the people, and our strengths are the powers of the Holy Ghost, and the weapons of our warfare are spiritual; and the eye of God watches over us curiously, to see if we watch over our flocks by day and by night. And though the primitive church, as the ecclesiastic histories observe, when they deposed a bishop from his office, ever concealed his crime, and made no record of it; yet remember this, that God does and will call us to a strict and severe account. Take heed that you may never hear that fearful sentence, 'I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat.' If you suffer Christ's little ones to starve, it will be required severely at your hands. And know this, that the time will quickly come, in which God shall say unto thee, in the words of the prophet, 'Where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock? What wilt thou say when he shall visit thee?'*

God, of his mercy, grant unto us all to be so faithful and so wise as to convert souls, and to be so blessed and so assisted, that we may give an account of our charges with joy, to the glory of God, to the edification and security of our flocks, and the salvation of our own souls, in that day when the great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls shall come to judgment, even our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, love and obedience, now and for evermore, Amen.

* Jer. xiii. 20, 21.

A

SERMON

PREACHED AT THE OPENING

OF THE

PARLIAMENT OF IRELAND,

May 8, 1661,

BEFORE THE RIGHT HONORABLE THE LORDS JUSTICES, AND THE LORDS SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL, AND THE COMMONS.

TO

THE RIGHT HONORABLE

THE LORDS SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL,

AND COMMONS OF IRELAND,

ASSEMBLED IN PARLIAMENT.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

I OUGHT not to dispute your commands for the printing my Sermon of Obedience, lest my sermon should be *protestatio contra factum.* Here I know my example would be the best use to this doctrine; and I am sure to find no inconveniency so great, as that of disobedience; neither can I be confident that I am wise in any thing, but when I obey; for then I have the wisdom of my superior for my warrant, or my excuse. I remember the saying of Aurelius the emperor, *Æquius est me tot et talium amicorum consilium, quam tot tales meam unius voluntatem sequi.* I could easily have pretended excuses; but that day I had taught others the contrary, and I would not shed that chalice, which my own hands had newly filled with waters issuing from the fountains of salvation.

My eyes are almost grown old with seeing the horrid mischiefs which came from rebellion and disobedience; and I would willingly now be blest with observation of peace and righteousness, plenty and religion, which do already, and I hope shall for ever, attend on obedience to the best king, and the best church, in the world. I see no objection against my hopes, but that which ought least of all, in this case, to be pretended. Men pretend conscience against obedience, expressly against St. Paul's doctrine, teaching us to

'obey for conscience sake;' but to disobey for conscience in a thing indifferent, is never to be found in the books of our religion.

It is very hard, when the prince is forced to say to his rebellious subject, as God did to his stubborn people, *Quid faciam tibi?* I have tried all the ways I can to bring thee home, and "what shall I now do unto thee?" The subject should rather say, *Quid me vis facere?* "What wilt thou have me to do?" This question is the best end of disputations. *Corrumpitur atque dissolvitur imperantis officium, si quis ad id quod facere jussus est, non obsequio debito, sed consilio non considerato, respondeat*, said one in A. Gellius: When a subject is commanded to obey, and he disputes, and says, Nay, but the other is better; he is like a servant that gives his master necessary counsel, when he requires of him a necessary obedience. *Utilius parere edicto quam efferre consilium;* "He had better obey than give counsel;" by how much it is better to be profitable than to be witty, to be full of goodness rather than full of talk and argument.

But all this is acknowleged true in strong men, but not in the weak; in vigorous, but not in tender consciences; for obedience is strong meat, and will not down with weak stomachs; as if, in the world, any thing were easier than to obey; for we see that the food of children is milk and laws; the breast-milk of their nurses, and the commands of their parents, is all that food and government, by which they are kept from harm and hunger, and conducted to life and wisdom. And, therefore, they that are weak brethren, of all things in the world, have the least reason to pretend an excuse for disobedience; for nothing can secure them but the wisdom of the laws; for they are like children in minority—they cannot be trusted to their own conduct, and, therefore, must live at the public charge; and the wisdom of their superiors is their guide and their security. And this was wisely advised by St. Paul: 'Him that is weak in the faith, receive, but not to doubtful disputations;' that is not the way for him; children must not dispute with their fathers and their masters. If old men will dispute, let them look to it; that is meat for the strong indeed, though it be not very nutritive; but the laws and the counsels, the exhortations and the doctrines of our spiritual rulers, are the measures, by which God hath appointed babes in Christ to become men, and the weak to become strong; and they

that are not to be received to doubtful disputations, are to be received with the arms of love, into the embraces of a certain and regular obedience.

But it would be considered, that "tenderness of conscience" is an equivocal term, and does not always signify in a good sense. For a child is of tender flesh; but he whose foot is out of joint, or hath a bile in his arm, or hath strained a sinew, is much more tender. The tenderness of age is that weakness that is in the ignorant and the new beginners: the tenderness of a bile,—that is soreness indeed, rather than tenderness,—is of the diseased, the abused, and the mispersuaded. The first, indeed, are to be tenderly dealt with, and have usages accordingly; but that is the same I have already told; you must teach them, you must command them, you must guide them, you must choose for them, you must be their guardians, and they must comport themselves accordingly. But for that tenderness of conscience, which is the disease and soreness of conscience, it must be cured by anodynes and soft usages, unless they prove ineffective, and that the lancet may be necessary. But there are amongst us such tender stomachs that cannot endure milk, but can very well digest iron; consciences so tender, that a ceremony is greatly offensive, but rebellion is not; a surplice drives them away, as a bird affrighted with a man of clouts, but their consciences can suffer them to despise government, and speak evil of dignities, and curse all that are not of their opinion, and disturb the peace of kingdoms, and commit sacrilege, and account schism the character of saints. The true tenderness of conscience is, 1. That which is impatient of a sin; 2. It will not endure any thing that looks like it; and 3. It will not give offence. Now, since all sin is disobedience, 1. It will be rarely contingent that a man, in a Christian commonwealth, shall be tied to disobey, to avoid sin; and certain it is, if such a case could happen, yet 2. nothing of our present question is so like a sin, as when we refuse to obey the laws. To stand in a clean vestment is not so ill a sight as to see men stand in separation; and to kneel at the communion is not so like idolatry as rebellion is to witchcraft. And then, 3. For the matter of "giving offences," what scandal is greater than that which scandalizes the laws? And who is so carefully to be observed, lest he be offended, as the king? And if that which offends the weak

brother, is to be avoided, much more that which offends the strong; for this is certainly really criminal; but for the other, it is much odds but it is mistaken. And when the case is so put, between the obedient and the disobedient, which shall be offended, and one will,—I suppose there is no question but the laws will take more care of subjects than of rebels, and not weaken them in their duty, in compliance with those that hate the laws, and will not endure the government.

And after all this in the conduct of government, what remedy can there be to those, that call themselves "tender consciences?" I shall not need to say, that every man can easily pretend it; for we have seen the vilest part of mankind, men that have done things so horrid, worse than which the sun never saw, yet pretend tender consciences against ecclesiastical laws. But I will suppose that they are really such; that they, in the simplicity of their hearts, follow Absalom, and in weakness hide their heads in little conventicles, and places of separation, for a trifle; what would they have done for themselves?

If you make a law of order, and, in the sanction, put a clause of favor for tender consciences, do not you invite every subject to disobedience by impunity, and teach him how to make his own excuse? Is not such a law a law without an obligation? May not every man choose whether he will obey or no? and if he pretends to disobey out of conscience, is not he that disobeys equally innocent with the obedient; altogether as just, as not having done any thing without leave; and yet much more religious and conscientious? *Quicunque vult* is but an ill preface to a law; and it is a strange obligation, that makes no difference between him that obeys and him that refuses to obey.

But what course must be taken with "tender consciences?" Shall the execution of the law be suspended as to all such persons? That will be all one with the former: for if the execution be commanded to be suspended, then the obligation of the law by command is taken away, and then it were better there were no law made. And indeed that is the pretension, that is the secret of the business; they suppose the best way to prevent disobedience is to take away all laws. It is a short way indeed; there shall then be no disobedience; but, at the same time, there shall be no govern-

ment: but the remedy is worse than the disease; and to take away all wine and strong drink, to prevent drunkenness, would not be half so great a folly.

I cannot, therefore, tell what to advise in this particular, but tha every spiritual guide should consider who are tender consciences, and who are weak brethren, and use all the ways of piety and prudence to instruct and to inform them, that they may increase in knowlege and spiritual understanding. But they that will be always learning, and never come to the knowlege of the truth; they that will be children of a hundred years old, and never come to years of discretion; they are very unfit to guide others, and to be curates of souls: but they are most unfit to reprove the laws, and speak against the wisdom of a nation, when it is confessed that they are so weak that they understand not the fundamental liberty which Christ hath purchased for them, but are servants to a scruple, and affrighted at a circumstance, and in bondage under an indifferent thing, and so much idolaters of their sect or opinion, as to prefer it before all their own nobler interests, and the charity of their brother, and the peace of a whole church and nation.

To you, my Lords and Gentlemen, I hope I may say, as Marcus Curius said to a stubborn young man, *Non opus esse eo cive reipublicæ, qui parere nesciret;* "The kingdom hath no need of those that know not how to obey."* But as for them who have weak and tender consciences, they are in the state of childhood and minority; but then you know that a child is never happy by having his own humor; if you choose for him, and make him to use it, he hath but one thing to do; but if you put him to please himself, he is troubled with every thing, and satisfied with nothing. We find that all Christian churches kept this rule; they kept themselves and others close to the rule of faith, and peaceably suffered one another to differ in ceremonies, but suffered no difference amongst their own; they gave liberty to other churches, and gave laws, and no liberty, to their own subjects: and at this day, the churches of Geneva, France, Switzerland, Germany, Low Countries, tie all their people to their own laws, but tie up no man's conscience; if he be not persuaded as they are, let him charitably dissent, and leave that go-

* Val. Max. vi. 3, 4.

vernment, and adhere to his own communion: if you be not of their mind, they will be served by them that are; they will not trouble your conscience, and you shall not disturb their government. But when we think they cannot enjoy their conscience unless you give them good livings, and if you prefer them not, you afflict their consciences; they do but too evidently declare, that it is not their consciences, but their profits, they would have secured. Now to these I have only this to say, that their conscience is to be enjoyed by the measures of God's word, but the rule for their estates is the laws of the kingdom; and "I show you yet a more excellent way;" obedience is the best security for both, because this is the best conservatory of charity, and truth, and peace. *Si vis brevi perfectus esse, esto obediens etiam in minimis*, was the saying of a saint; and the world uses to look for miracles from them whom they shall esteem saints; but "I had rather see a man truly humble and obedient, than to see him raise a man from the dead," said old Pachomius.

But to conclude: if weak brethren shall still plead for toleration and compliance, I hope my Lords the bishops will consider where it can do good, and do no harm; where they are permitted, and where themselves are bound up by the laws; and in all things where it is safe and holy, to labor to bring them ease and to give them remedy: but to think of removing the disease by feeding the humor, I confess it is a strange cure to our present distempers. He that took clay and spittle to open the blind eyes, can make any thing be collyrium; but he alone can do it. But whether any human power can bring good from so unlikely an instrument, if any man desires yet to be better informed, I desire him, besides the calling to mind the late sad effects of schism, to remember that no church in Christendom ever did it. It is neither the way of peace nor government, nor yet a proper remedy for the cure of a weak conscience.

I shall, therefore, pray to God, that these men who separate in simplicity, may, by God's mercy, be brought to understand their own liberty, and that they may not, for ever, be babes and neophytes, and wax old in trifles, and for ever stay at the entrances and outsides of religion; but that they would pass *in interiora domus*, and seek after peace and righteousness, holiness and justice,

the love of God and evangelical perfections; and then they will understand how ill-advised they are, who think religion consists in zeal against ceremonies, and speaking evil of the laws.

My Lords and Gentlemen, what I said in pursuance of public peace and private duty, and some little incidences to both, I now humbly present to you, more to show my own obedience than to remind you of your duty, which, hitherto, you have so well observed in your amicable and sweet concord of counsels and affections, during this present session. I owe many thanks to you, who heard me patiently, willingly, and kindly; I endeavored to please God, and I find I did not displease you: but he is the best hearer of a sermon, who first loves the doctrine, and then practises it; and that you have hitherto done, very piously and very prosperously. I pray God continue to direct your counsels, so that you, in all things, may please him, and in all things be blessed by him, that all generations may call you blessed instruments of a lasting peace, the restorers of the old paths, the patrons of the church, friends of religion, and subjects fitted for your prince, who is just up to the greatest example, and merciful beyond all examples; a prince, who hath been nourished, and preserved, and restored, and blessed, by miracles; a prince, whose virtues and fortunes are equally the greatest.

SUMMARY OF SERMON V.

1 SAMUEL, CHAP. XV.—VERSES 22, 23.

NOTHING is more easy than to say our prayers, and to obey our superiors; yet there is nothing to which we are so averse as to prayer, and nothing seems so intolerable as obedience: this topic enlarged on; also the great example of our blessed Lord in this matter. Meaning of *sacrifice* and *obedience* in the text explained. The text stated to be a perfect proposition, and to have no special remark in the words of it. It is instanced in the matter of obedience to God: but obedience to our superiors is really, and is to be accounted, obedience to God; for they are sent by him, and are his vicegerents, &c.

Two things are to be observed. First, we may perceive that God speaks to us, when he uses the ministry of men, as when he uses that of angels; one being as much declared, and as certain, as the other.

Secondly; there can be but two things in the world required to make obedience necessary; the greatness of the authority, and the worthiness of the thing. The thing itself is but one; there is but one authority in the world, and that is God's. But is there no difference in the thing commanded? Certainly there is some; but nothing to warrant disobedience; for whatever the thing be, it may be commanded by man, if it be not countermanded by God. For, 1. it is not required that every thing commanded should of itself be necessary; for God himself often commands things, which have in them no other excellency than that of obedience: this enlarged on: 2. and if we pretend willingness to obey in such matters, when a divine command in-

terposes, why should we desire to be excused if it be only a command of man? Can we become a law unto ourselves, and cannot the word and power of our superiors also become a law to us? this enlarged on: 3. but what if our princes, or our prelates, command things against the word of God? We must obey God and not man: this subject enlarged on, and mistakes of sectarians, &c. arising from it, pointed out. Considerations respecting what authority is to do in this case, and what sectarians and recusants are to do.

1. Concerning authority. All disagreeing persons, to cover their shame of disobedience, plead conscience for their judge, and Scripture for their law. On the same ground the superior may do what he thinks his duty, and be at least as safe as they are: this enlarged on.

2. The superior is tied, by the laws of Christian charity, so far to bend in his laws, as to pity the invincible ignorance and weakness of his abused people, *devoured by evil shepherds:* but this is to last no longer than till the ignorance can be cured, and the man be taught his duty: this enlarged on.

The next inquiry is, What must the disagreeing subject do, when he supposes the superior's command to be against the law of God? If he thinks so, and thinks truly, he must not obey in that. But because many think amiss in this case, there are some particulars to be considered by them.

1. Let such think charitably of others, &c. and that they themselves are fallible; that not all their opinions are from inspiration of God, &c.

2. Every man engaged against authority, would do well to study his doubtful opinion less, and humility and obedience more, &c.

3. In all disputes, he that obeys his superior can never be a heretic in the estimate of law, or a schismatic in point of conscience; so that he certainly avoids one great death, and, very probably, the other: this topic enlarged on.

Such are the blessings of obedience. Other considerations remain, which are highly proper to be addressed to the high and honorable Court of Parliament.

1. There is no better method of peace, than the reducing all men to obedience, and all questions to the measures of the laws: this explained.

2. This is true not only in religious prudence and plain necessity; but it is the way which God has appointed and blessed, &c.

3. And because this is God's way of ending our controversies, the matter of authority is highly to be regarded: this explained.

4. Let no man be too busy in disputing the laws of his superiors; for by that he seldom gets good to himself, and seldom misses to do mischief to others: this enlarged on.

5. Moreover, the laws and decrees of a national church ought, on account of their own advantages, to be esteemed as a final sentence in all things disputed: the thing is a plain command: see Heb. xiii. 7.: this topic enlarged on. Observations on such a passive obedience as does not acquit a man before God.

Another part of the text still remains to be handled: this from want of time is included in a brief exhortation to the honorable auditory.

The judicial power of majesty is now delegated to them, &c. It is not reasonable to expect that the subject should obey them, unless they obey God, &c. Exhortations addressed to them more particularly on their capacity of union and government, and the special duties thereby incumbent on them.

1. Take care that all power and counsels be employed in doing honor and advantage to piety and holiness: this enlarged on.

2. As God is to be obeyed, and you are to take care that he be, so God must be honored by reverence and religious obedi-

ence paid to those whom he hath been pleased to honor in the dispensation of his blessings and the ministration of his religion: this enlarged on.

3. In the same proportion, you are to take care of all inferior relatives of God and of religion: this explained.

4. You cannot obey God, unless you do justice; for this also is *better than sacrifice:* particular topics in this case insisted on.

5. As *obedience is better than sacrifice,* so God also said, *I will have mercy and not sacrifice;* meaning, that mercy is the best obedience.

Concluding recommendations to union among themselves, and cautions against divisions.

SERMON V.

A SERMON PREACHED AT THE OPENING OF THE PARLIAMENT.

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1 SAMUEL, CHAP. XV.—VERSES 22, 23.

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams:
For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.

In the world, nothing is more easy than to say our prayers, and to obey our superiors; and yet in the world, there is nothing to which we are so unwilling as to prayer, and nothing seems so intolerable as obedience; for men esteem all laws to be fetters, and their superiors are their enemies: and when a command is given, we turn into all shapes of excuse, to escape from the imposition: for either the authority is incompetent, or the law itself is *statutum non bonum;* or it is impossible to be kept, or at least very inconvenient, and we are to be relieved in equity; or there is a secret dispensation, and it does not bind in my particular case, or not now; or it is but the law of a man, and was made for a certain end; or it does not bind the conscience, but it was only for political regards; or, if the worst happen, I will obey passively, and then I am innocent. Thus every man snuffs up the wind like 'the wild asses in the wilderness,' and thinks that authority is an encroachment on a man's birthright; and, in the mean time, never considers, that Christ took on him our nature, that he might learn us obedience, and in that also make us become like unto God. In

his justice and his mercy he was inimitable before; but before the incarnation of Christ, we could not, in passive graces, imitate God, who was impassible: but he was pleased, at a great rate, to set forward this duty; and when himself became obedient in the hardest point, *obediens usque ad mortem*, and is now become to us 'the Author and Finisher' of our obedience, as well as of our faith,—*admonetur omnis ætas fieri posse quod aliquando factum est.* We must needs confess it very possible to obey the severest of the Divine laws, even to die if God commands, because it was already done by a man; and we must needs confess it excellent, because it was done by God himself.

But this great example is of universal influence in the whole matter of obedience: for, that I may speak of that part of this duty, which can be useful, and concerns us; men do not deny but they must obey in all civil things; but in religion they have a supreme God only, and conscience is his interpreter; and, in effect, every man must be the judge, whether he shall obey or no. Therefore it is that I say, the example of our Lord is the great determination of this inquiry; for he did obey and suffer, according to the commands of his superiors, under whose government he was placed; he 'gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to the nippers;' he kept the orders of the rulers and the customs of the synagogues, the law of Moses and the rites of the temple; and by so doing, 'he fulfilled all righteousness.' Christ made no distinctions in his obedience; but obeyed God 'in all things,' and those that God set over him, 'in all things according to God,' and in things of religion most of all, because to obey was of itself a great instance of religion; and if ever religion comes to be pretended against obedience, in any thing where our superior can command, it is imposture: for that is the purpose of my text, 'obedience is better than sacrifice.' Our own judgment, our own opinion, is the sacrifice seldom fit to be offered to God, but most commonly deserving to be consumed by fire: but, take it at the best, it is not half so good as obedience; for that was, indeed, Christ's sacrifice; and, as David said of Goliath's sword, *Non est alter talis*, there is no other sacrifice that can be half so good: and when Abraham had lifted up his sacrificing knife

to slay his son, and so expressed his obedience, God would have no more; he had the obedience, and he cared not for the sacrifice.

By sacrifice here, then, is meant the external and contingent actions of religion; by obedience, is meant submission to authority, and observing the command. Obedience is a not choosing our duty, a not disputing with our betters, not to argue, not to delay, not to murmur; it is not only this, but it is much better; for it is love,—and simplicity,—and humility,—and usefulness; and I think these do reductively contain all that is excellent in the whole conjugation of Christian graces.

My text is a perfect proposition, and hath no special remark in the words of it; but is only a great representation of the most useful truth to all kingdoms and parliaments, and councils and authorities, in the whole world: it is your charter, and the sanction of your authority, and the stabiliment of your peace, and the honor of your laws, and the great defence of your religion, and the building up and the guarding of the king's throne. It is that by which all the societies in heaven and earth are firm: without this you cannot have a village prosperous, or a ship arrive in harbor: it is that which God hath bound on us by hope and fear, by wrath and conscience, by duty and necessity. Obedience is the formality of all virtues, and every sin is disobedience: there can no greater thing be said, unless you please to add, that we never read that the earth opened and swallowed up any man alive but a company of rebellious, disobedient people, who rose up against Moses and Aaron, the prince of the people and the priest of God. For obedience is the most necessary thing in the world, and *corruptio optimi est pessima:* disobedience is the greatest evil in the world, and that alone which can destroy it.*

My text is instanced in the matter of obedience to God; but yet the case is so, that though I shall, in the first place, discourse of our obedience to man, I shall not set one foot aside from the main intention of it; because obedience to our superiors is really, and is accounted to be, obedience to God;

* Nullum malum majus aut infeliciter feracius quam inobedientia.—Seneca.

for they are sent by God; they are his vicegerents, his ministers, and his ambassadors. *Apostolus cujusque est quisque*, say the Jews; "Every man's Apostle is himself;" and 'he that heareth or despiseth you,' said Christ, 'heareth or despiseth me:' and the reason is very evident,—because it is not to be expected, that God should speak to us by himself, but sometimes by angels, sometimes by prophets, once by his Son, and always by his servants.

Now I desire two things to be observed:—

First: We may as well perceive that God speaks to us, when he uses the ministry of men, as when he uses the ministry of angels: one is as much declared and as certain as the other. And if it be said, a man may pretend to come from God, and yet deliver nothing but his own errand, that is no strange thing: but remember also that St. Paul puts this supposition in the case of an angel, 'If an angel preach any other gospel;' and we know that many angels come like angels of light, who yet teach nothing but the ways of darkness. So that we are still as much bound to obey our superior as to obey an angel: a man is *paulo minor angelis*, 'a little lower than the angels;' but we are much lower than the king. Consider, then, with what fear and love we should receive an angel; and so let us receive all those whom God hath sent to us, and set over us; for they are no less; less, indeed, in their persons, but not in their authorities. Nay, the case is nearer yet: for we are not only bound to receive God's deputies as God's angels, but as God himself: for it is the power of God in the hand of a man, and 'he that resists, resists God's ordinance.' And I pray remember, that there is not only no power greater than God's, but there is no other; for all power is his. The consequent of this is plain enough; I need say no more of it: it is all one to us who commands, God, or God's vicegerent. This was the first thing to be observed.

Secondly: There can be but two things in the world required to make obedience necessary; the greatness of the authority, and the worthiness of the thing. In the first you see the case can have no difference, because the thing itself is but one: there is but one authority in the world, and that is God's; as there is but one sun, whose light is diffused into all king-

doms. But is there not great difference in the thing commanded? Yes, certainly there is some; but nothing to warrant disobedience: for, whatever the thing be, it may be commanded by man, if it be not countermanded by God. For,

1. It is not required that every thing commanded should of itself be necessary;—for God himself oftentimes commands things, which have in them no other excellency than that of obedience. What made Abraham 'the friend of God?' and what made his offer to kill his son to be so pleasing to God? It had been naturally no very great good to cut the throat of a little child; but only that it was obedience. What excellency was there in the journeys of the patriarchs from Mesopotamia to Syria, from the land of Canaan into Egypt? and what thanks could the sons of Israel deserve, that they sat still on the seventh day of the week? and how can a man be dearer unto God by keeping of a feast, or building of a booth, or going to Jerusalem, or cutting off the foreskin of a boy, or washing their hands and garments in fair water? There was nothing in these things but the obedience. And when our blessed Lord himself came to his servant, to take of him the baptism of repentance, alas! he could take nothing but the water and the ceremony; for, as Tertullian observes, he was *nullius pœnitentiæ debitor;* he was, indeed, 'a just person, and needed no repentance;' but even so it 'became him to fulfil all righteousness:' but yet even then it was that the Holy Spirit did descend on his holy head, and crowned that obedience, though it were but a ceremony. Obedience, you see, may be necessary, when the law is not so: for in these cases, God's Son and God's servants did obey in things, which were made good only by the commandment: and if we do so in the instances of human laws, there is nothing to be said against it, but that what was not of itself necessary, is made so by the authority of the commander, and the force of the commandment: but there is more in it than so. For,

2. We pretend to be willing to obey, even in things naturally not necessary, if a Divine command does interpose; but if it be only a commandment of man, and the thing be not necessary of itself, then we desire to be excused. But will we do nothing else? We ourselves will do many things that God

hath not commanded; and may not our superiors command us, in many cases, to do what we may lawfully do without a commandment? Can we become a law unto ourselves, and cannot the word and power of our superiors also become a law unto us? hath God given more to a private than to a public hand? But consider the ill consequents of this fond opinion. Are all the practices of Geneva or Scotland recorded in the word of God? are the trifling ceremonies of their public penance recorded in the four gospels? are all the rules of decency, and all 'things that are of good report,' and all the measures of prudence, and the laws of peace and war, and the customs of the churches of God, and the lines of public honesty, are all these described to us by the laws of God? If they be, let us see and read them, that we may have an end to all questions and minute cases of conscience: but if they be not, and yet by the word of God these are bound on us in general, and no otherwise; then it follows, that the particulars of all these, which may be infinite, and are innumerable, yet may be the matter of human laws; and then are bound on us by the power of God, put into the hands of man. The consequent is this, that whatsoever is commanded by our superiors, according to the will of God, or whatsoever is not against it, is, of necessity, to be obeyed.

3. But what if our princes or our prelates command things against the word of God? What then? Why nothing then, but that we must obey God, and not man; there is no dispute of that. But what then again? Why, therefore, says the papist, "I will not obey the protestant kings, because, against the word of God, they command me to come to church, where heresy is preached;" "and I will not acknowlege the bishops," saith the presbyterian, "because they are against the discipline and sceptre of Jesus Christ;" and the independent hates parochial meetings, and is wholly for a gathered church, and supposes this to be the practice apostolical; and "I will not bring my child to baptism," saith the anabaptist, "because God calls none but believers to that sacrament;" and "I will acknowlege no clergy, no lord, no master," saith the quaker, "because Christ commands us to call no man master on the earth, and be not called of men rabbi." And if you call on

these men to obey the authority God hath set over them, they tell you with one voice, with all their hearts, as far as the word of God will give them leave, "but God is to be obeyed, and not man;" and, therefore, if you put the laws in execution against them, they will obey you passively, because you are stronger; and so long as they know it, they will not stir against you; but they, in the mean time, are little less than martyrs, and you no better than persecutors.

What shall we do now? for here is evidently a great heap of disorder: they all confess that authority must be obeyed; but when you come to the trial, none of them all will do it, and they think they are not bound: but because their opinions, being contrary, cannot all be right, and, it may be, none of them are,—it is certain, that all this while authority is infinitely wronged and prejudiced amongst them, when all fantastic opinions shall be accounted a sufficient reason to despise it. I hope the presbyterian will join with the protestant, and say, that the papist, and the Socinian, and the independent, and the anabaptist, and the quaker, are guilty of rebellion and disobedience, for all their pretence of the word of God to be on their side: and I am more sure that all these will join with the protestant, and say, that the presbyterian hath no reason to disobey authority on pretence of their new government, concerning which they do but dream dreams, when they think they see visions. Certain it is, that the biggest part of dissenters in the whole world are criminally disobedient; and it is a thousand to one but that authority is in the right against them, and ought to be obeyed. It remains now, in the next place, that we inquire what authority is to do in this case, and what these sectaries and recusants are to do; for these are two things worth inquiry.

1. Concerning authority. All disagreeing persons, to cover their foul shame of rebellion or disobedience, pretend conscience for their judge, and the Scripture for their law. Now, if these men think, that, by this means, they proceed safely, on the same ground the superior may do what he thinks to be his duty, and be at least as safe as they. If the rebellious subject can think, that, by God's law, he ought not to obey, the prince may, at the same time, think, that, by God's law, he

ought to punish him: and it is as certain that he is justly punished, as he thinks it certain he reasonably disobeys. Or is the conscience of the superior bound to relax his laws, if the inferior tells him so? Can the prince give laws to the people's will, and can the people give measures to the prince's understanding? If any one of the people can prescribe or make it necessary to change the law, then every one can; and by this time every new opinion will introduce a new law, and that law shall be obeyed by him only that hath a mind to it, and that will be a strange law, that binds a man only to do his own pleasure. But because the king's conscience is to him as sure a rule as the conscience of any disobedient subject can be to himself, the prince is as much bound to do his duty in government, as the other can be to follow his conscience in disagreeing; and the consequent will be, that whether the subject be right or wrong in the disputation, it is certain he hath the just reward of disobedience in the conclusion. If one man's conscience can be the measure of another man's action, why shall not the prince's conscience be the subject's measure? But if it cannot, then the prince is not to depart from his own conscience, but proceed according to the laws which he judges just and reasonable.

2. The superior is tied, by the laws of Christian charity, so far to bend in the ministration of his laws, as to pity the invincible ignorance and weakness of his abused people, *qui devoratur a malis pastoribus*, as St. Jerome's expression is, "that are devoured by their evil shepherds:" but this is to last no longer than till the ignorance can be cured, and the man be taught his duty; for whatsoever comes after this, looks so like obstinacy, that no laws in the world judge it to be any thing else. And then, secondly, this also is to be understood to be the duty of superiors only in matters of mere opinion, not relating to practice. For no man's opinion must be suffered to do mischief, to disturb the peace, to dishonor the government; not only because every disagreeing person can, to serve his end, pretend his conscience, and so claim impunity for his villany; but also because those things, which concern the good of mankind and the peace of kingdoms, are so plainly taught,

that no man who thinks himself so wise as to be fit to oppose authority, can be so foolish as in these things not to know his duty. In other things, if the opinion does neither bite nor scratch, if it dwells at home in the house of understanding, and wanders not into the outhouses of passion and popular orations, the superior imposes no laws, and exacts no obedience, and destroys no liberty, and gives no restraint: this is the part of authority.

The next inquiry is, What must the disagreeing subject do, when he supposes the superior's command is against the law of God? I answer, that if he thinks so, and thinks true, he must not obey his superior in that: but because most men that think so, think amiss,—there are many particulars fit, by such persons, to be considered.

1. Let such men think charitably of others, and that all are not fools or madmen, who are not of the same opinion with themselves or their own little party. 2. Let him think himself as fallible and subject to mistake as other men are. 3. But let him by no means think that every opinion of his is an inspiration from God; for that is the pride and madness of a pretended religion: such a man is to be cured by physic; for he could not enter into that persuasion by reason or experience, and, therefore, it must enter into him by folly or the anger of God. 4. From hence it will naturally follow, that he ought to think his opinion to be uncertain, and that he ought not to behave himself like the man that is too confident; but because his obedience is duty, and his duty certain, he will find it more wise, and safe, and holy, to leave that which is disputable, and pursue that which is demonstrable; to change his uncertain opinion for his certain duty: for it is twenty to one but he is deceived in his opinion; but if he be, it is certain that whatsoever his conscience be, yet, in his separation from authority, he is a sinner.

2. Every man who, by his opinion, is engaged against authority, should do well to study his doubtful opinion less, and humility and obedience more. But you say, that this concerns not me; for my disagreeing is not in a doubtful matter, but I am sure I am in the right; there are no ifs and ands in my case.

Well, it may be so: but were it not better that you did doubt? 'A wise man feareth,' saith Solomon, 'and departeth from evil; but a fool rageth and is confident:' and the difference between a learned man and a novice is this, that the young fellow crieth out, "I am sure it is so;" the better learned answers, ἴσως καὶ τὸ τάχα, "Possibly it may, and peradventure it is so, but I pray inquire:" and he is the best diviner, μάντις ἄριστος ὅστις εἰκάζει καλῶς, "he is the best judge that conjectures best," not he that is most confident; for, as Xenophon said wisely, "Man does but conjecture, but God only knows;" and it is no disparagement to a wise man to learn, and,—by suspecting the fallibility of things, and his own aptness to mistake,—to walk prudently and safely, with an eye to God, and an ear open to his superior. Some men are drunk with fancy, and mad with opinion. Who believe more strongly than boys and women? who are so hard to be persuaded as fools? and who so readily suspect their teachers as they who are governed by chance, and know not the intrinsic measures of good and evil? *Qui pauca considerat, de facili pronuntiat;* "it is a little learning, and not enough, that makes men conclude hastily," and clap fast hold on the conclusion before they have well weighed the premises; but experience and humility would teach us modesty and fear.

3. In all disputes, he that obeys his superior, can never be a heretic in the estimate of law, and he can never be a schismatic in the point of conscience; so that he certainly avoids one great death, and, very probably, the other. *Res judicata pro veritate accipitur*, saith the law: "If the judge have given sentence, that sentence is supposed a truth:" and Cassiodorus said, according to the sentence of the law, *Nimis iniquum est, ut ille patiatur dispendium, qui imperium fecit alienum.* Our obedience secures us from the imputation of evil, and error does but seldom go in company with obedience. But, however, there is this advantage to be gotten by obedience; that he who prefers the sentence of the law before his own opinion, does do an act of great humility, and exercises the grace of modesty, and takes the best way to secure his conscience and the public peace, and pleases the government which he is bound to please,

and pursues the excellencies of unity, and promotes charity and godly love: whereas, on the other side, he that goes by himself, apart from his superior, is always materially a schismatic, and is more likely to be deceived by his own singularity, and prejudice, and weakness, than by following the guides God hath set over him. And if he loses truth, certainly he will get nothing else: for by so doing we lose our peace too, and give public offence, and arm authority against us, and are scandalous in law, and pull evil on our heads; and all this for a proud singularity, or a trifling opinion, in which we are not so likely to be deceived, if we trust ourselves less, and the public more. *In omnibus falli possum, in obedientia non possum*, said St. Teresa; "I can in every thing else, but in obedience I can never be deceived." And it is very remarkable in my text, that 'rebellion' or 'disobedience' is compared to 'the sin of witchcraft.' Indeed, it seems strange; for the meaning of it is not only that a rebel is as much hated by God as a witch, but it means that the sins are alike in their very natures. *Quasi peccatum divinationis*, saith the vulgar Latin; they that disobey authority, trusting in their own opinions, are but like witches or diviners; that is, they are led by an evil spirit: pride and a lying and deceiving spirit is their teacher, and their answers are seldom true; for though they pretend the truth of God for their disobedience, yet they 'fall into the deception of the devil;' and that is the end of their soothsaying. And let me add this, that when a man distrusts his superior, and trusts himself, if he misses truth, it will be greatly imputed to him: he shall feel the evil of his error and the shame of his pride, the reproach of his folly and the punishment of his disobedience, the dishonor of singularity, and the restlessness of schism, and the scorn of the multitude. But, on the other side, if he obey authority, and yet be deceived, he is greatly excused; he erred on the safer side, he is defended by the hands of many virtues, and gets peace and love of the congregation.

You see the blessings of obedience, even in the questions and matters of religion: but I have something more to say; and it is not only of great use to appease the tumultuary disputations and arguings of religion, which have lately dis-

turbed these nations, but is proper to be spoken to, and to be reduced to practice, by the honorable and high court of parliament.

That which I am to say is this:—You have no other way of peace, no better way to appease and quiet the quarrels in religion which have been too long among us, but by reducing all men to obedience, and all questions to the measures of the laws: for they on both sides pretend Scripture, but one side only can pretend to the laws; and they that do admit no authority above their own to expound Scripture, cannot deny but kings and parliaments are the makers and proper expounders of our laws; and if ever you mean to have 'truth and peace kiss each other,' let no man dispute against your laws. For did not our blessed Saviour say, that an oath is the end of all questions, and, after depositions are taken, all judges go to sentence? What oaths are to private questions, that laws are to public. And if it be said that laws may be mistaken, it is true; but may not an oath also be a perjury? and yet, because in human affairs we have no greater certainty, and greater than God gives we may not look for,—let the laws be the last determination; and, in wise and religious governments, no disputation is to go beyond them.

2. But this is not only true in religious prudence and plain necessity, but this is the way that God hath appointed, and that he hath blessed, and that he hath intended to be the means of ending all questions. This we learn from St. Paul,* 'I exhort that, first of all, prayers, and supplications, and intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and all that are in authority.' For all; for parliaments and for councils, for bishops and for magistrates: it is for all, and for kings above all. Well; to what purpose is all this? 'That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.' Mark that: 'kings and all that are in authority,' are by God appointed to be the means of obtaining unity and peace in godliness, ἐν εὐσεβείαις, 'in all the true and godly worshippings' of God; no unity in religion without kings and bishops, and those that are in authority.

* 2 Tim. ii. 1.

3. And, indeed, because this is God's way of ending our controversies, the matter of authority is highly to be regarded. If you suffer the authority of the king to be lessened, to be scrupled, to be denied in ecclesiastical affairs, you have no way left to silence the tongues and hands of gainsaying people. But so it is; the king's authority is appointed and enabled by God to end our questions of religion: *Divinatio in labiis regis* (saith Solomon*); *in judicio non errabit os ejus:* 'Divination and a wise sentence is in the lips of the king, and his mouth shall not err in judgment.' In all Scripture there is not so much for the pope's infallibility; but by this it appears there is divinity in the king's sentence; for God gives to kings, who are his vicegerents, a peculiar spirit. And when Justinian had, out of the sense of Julian the lawyer, observed that there were many cases, for which law made no provision, he adds: "If any such shall happen,"† *Augustum imploretur remedium,* "run to the king for remedy;" for, therefore, God hath set the imperial fortune over human affairs, *ut possit omnia quæ noviter contingunt, et emendare et componere, et modis ac regulis competentibus tradere,* "that the king may amend and rule and compose every new-arising question." And it is not to be despised, but is a great indication of this truth, that the answers of the Roman princes and judges recorded in the civil law are such, that all nations of the world do approve them, and are a great testimony how the sentences of kings ought to be valued, even in matters of religion, and questions of greatest doubt. *Bona conscientia scyphus est Josephi,* said the old abbot of Kells:‡ "A good conscience is like Joseph's cup," in which our lord the king divines. And since God hath blessed us with so good, so just, so religious, and so wise a prince, let the sentence of his laws be our last resort, and no questions be permitted after his judgment and legal determination: for wisdom saith, 'By me princes rule, by me they decree justice:' and therefore the spirit of the king is a divine eminency, and is as the spirit of the most high God.

* Prov. xvi. 10. † Lib. viii. cod. de Veteri Jure enucleando.
‡ Petrus Cellensis, lib. de Conscientia.

4. Let no man be too busy in disputing the laws of his superiors; for a man by that seldom gets good to himself, but seldom misses to do mischief unto others: Μὴ ἔριζε γονεῦσι, κἂν δίκαια λέγῃς, said one in Laertius. Will a son contend with his father? that is not decent, though the son speak that which is right: he may, possibly, say well enough, but he does do very ill; not only because he does not pay his duty and reverential fear, but because it is in itself very often unreasonable to dispute concerning the command of our superior, whether it be good or no; for the very commandment can make it not only good, but a necessary good. 'It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay on you no greater burden than these necessary things,' said the council of Jerusalem; and yet these things were not necessary, but as they were commanded: to abstain from a strangled hen or a bloody pudding, could not of themselves be necessary; but the commandment came, authority did interpose, and then they were made so.

5. But then, besides the advantages both of the spirit and the authority of kings, in matter of question, the laws and decrees of a national church ought, on the account of their own advantages, to be esteemed as a final sentence in all things disputed. The thing is a plain command: 'Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God.'* This tells what rulers he means; rulers ecclesiastical; and what of them? 'whose faith follow,' they must *præire in articulis;* they are not masters of your faith, but guides of it; and 'they that sit in Moses' chair' must be heard and obeyed, said our blessed Saviour. These words were not said for nothing; and they were nothing, if their authority were nothing.

For between the laws of a church and the opinion of a subject, the comparison is the same as between a public spirit and a private. The public is far the better; the daughter of God, and the mother of a blessing, and always dwells in light. The public spirit hath already passed the trial, it hath been 'subjected to the prophets,' tried and searched and approved:

* Heb. xiii. 7.

the private is yet to be examined. The public spirit is uniform and apt to be followed; the private is various and multiform as chance, and no man can follow him that hath it: for if he follows one, he is reproved by a thousand; and if he changes, he may get a shame, but no truth; and he can never rest but in the arms and conduct of his superior. When Aaron and Miriam murmured against Moses, God told them they were prophets of an inferior rank than Moses was. God communicated himself to them in dreams and visions; but the ruach hakkodesh, רוח הקדש 'the public spirit' of Moses their prince, that was higher: and what then? 'Wherefore, then,' (God said*) 'were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?' plainly teaching us, that where there is a more excellent spirit, they that have a spirit less excellent, ought to be afraid to speak against it. And this is the full case of the private and public spirit; that is, of a subject speaking against the spirit and the laws of the church. In heaven, and in the air, and in all the regions of spirits, the spirit of a lower order dares not speak against the spirit of a higher; and, therefore, for a private spirit to oppose the public, is a disorder greater than is in hell itself.

To conclude this point: let us consider whether it were not an intolerable mischief, if the judges should give sentence in causes of instance by the measures of their own fancy, and not by the laws; who would endure them? and yet why may they not do that as well as any ecclesiastic person preach religion, not which the laws allow, but what is taught him by his own private opinion? But he that hath the laws on his side, hath ever something of true religion to warrant him, and can never want a great measure of justification: νόμος καὶ χώρα, "the laws and the customs of the country," are the results of wise counsels or long experience; they ever comply with peace and public benefit; and nothing of this can be said of private religions; for they break the peace, and trouble the conscience, and undo government, and despise the laws, and offend princes, and dishonor the wisdom of parliaments, and destroy obedience.

* Num. xii. 6, 7, 8.

Well; but in the last place: but if we cannot do what the laws command, we will suffer what they impose; and then all is well again. But first, who ever did so that could help it? And, secondly, this talking of passive obedience is but a mockery; for what man did ever say the laws were not good, but he also said the punishment was unjust? And thirdly, which of all the recusants did not endeavor to get ground on the laws, and secretly or openly asperse the authority that put him to pain for doing that which he calls his duty? and can any man boast of his passive obedience that calls it persecution? He may think to please himself, but he neither does nor says any thing that is for the reputation of the laws: such men are like them that sail in a storm; they may possibly be thrown into a harbor, but they are very sick all the way.

But after all this, I have one thing to observe to such persons, that such a passive obedience as this does not acquit a man before God; and he that suffers what the law inflicts, is not discharged in the court of conscience, but there is still a sinner and a debtor: for 'the law is not made for the righteous, but for sinners;' that is, the punishment appointed by the law falls on him only that hath sinned; but an offending subject cannot, 'with the fruit of his body, pay for the sin of his soul:' when he does evil, he must suffer evil; but if he does not repent besides, a worse thing will happen to him; for we are not tied to obey only for wrath, but also for conscience. Passive obedience is only the correspondent of wrath, but it is the active obedience that is required by conscience: and whatever the subject suffers for his own fault, it matters nothing as to his duty; but this also God will exact at the hands of every man that is placed under authority.

I have now told you the sum of what I had to say concerning obedience to laws and to your own government; and it will be to little purpose to make laws in matter of religion, or in any thing else, if the end of it be, that every man shall choose whether he will obey or no: and if it be questioned whether you be deceived or no, though the suffering such a question is a great diminution to your authority, yet it is infinitely more probable that you are in the right than that the

disobedient subject is; because you are conducted with a public spirit,—you have a special title and peculiar portions of the promise of God's assistance,—you have all the helps of counsel and the advantages of deliberation,—you have the Scriptures and the laws,—you are as much concerned to judge according to truth as any man,—you have the principal of all capacities and states of men to assist your consultations,—you are the most concerned for peace,—and to please God also is your biggest interest: and, therefore, it cannot be denied to be the most reasonable thing in the world which is set down in the law, *Præsumptio est pro auctoritate imponentis*, the presumption of truth ought to be on your side; and since this is the most likely way for truth, and the most certain way for peace, you are to insist in this, and it is not possible to find a better.

I have another part or sense of my text yet to handle; but, because I have no more time of my own, and I will not take any of yours, I shall only do it in a short exhortation to this most honorable auditory, and so conclude.

God hath put a royal mantle, and fastened it with a golden clasp, on the shoulder of the king, and he hath given you the judge's robe; the king holds the sceptre, and he hath now permitted you to touch the golden ball, and to take it awhile into your handling, and make obedience to your laws to be duty and religion: but then remember that the first in every kind is to be the measure of the rest; you cannot reasonably expect that the subjects should obey you, unless you obey God. I do not speak this only in relation to your personal duty; though in that also it would be considered, that all the bishops and ministers of religion are bound to teach the same doctrines by their lives as they do by their sermons; and what we are to do in the matters of doctrine, you are also to do in matter of laws; what is reasonable for the advantages of religion, is also the best method for the advantages of government; we must preach by our good example, and you must govern y it; and your good example, in observing the laws of religion, will strangely endear them to the affections of the people. But I shall rather speak to you as you are in a capacity of union and

of government; for as now you have a new power, so there is incumbent on you a special duty.

1. Take care that all your power and your counsels be employed in doing honor and advantages to piety and holiness. Then you obey God in your public capacity, when, by holy laws and wise administrations, you take care that all the land be an obedient and a religious people. For then you are princely rulers indeed, when you take care of the salvation of a whole nation. *Nihil aliud est imperium nisi cura salutis alienæ*, said Ammianus; "Government is nothing but a care that all men be saved." And, therefore, take care that men do not destroy their souls by the abominations of an evil life: see that God be obeyed; take care that the breach of the laws of God may not be unpunished. The best way to make men to be good subjects to the king, is to make them good servants of God. Suffer not drunkenness to pass with impunity; let lust find a public shame; let the sons of the nobility and gentry no more dare to dishonor God than the meanest of the people shall; let baseness be basely esteemed; that is, put such characters of shame on dishonorable crimes, that it be esteemed more against the honor of a gentleman to be drunk than to be kicked, more shame to fornicate than to be caned: and for honor's sake, and the reputation of Christianity, take some course, that the most unworthy sins of the world have not reputation added to them, by being the practice of gentlemen and persons of good birth and fortunes. Let not them who should be examples of holiness, have an impunity and a license to provoke God to anger; lest it be said, that in Ireland it is not lawful for any man to sin, unless he be a person of quality. *Optimus est reipublicæ status, ubi nihil deest nisi licentia pereundi:* "In a commonwealth, that is the best state of things where every thing can be had but a leave to sin, a license to be undone." *

2. As God is thus to be obeyed, and you are to take care that he be, so God also must be honored, by paying that reverence and religious obedience which is due to those persons,

* Seneca.

whom he hath been pleased to honor, by admitting them to the dispensation of his blessings, and the ministries of your religion. For certain it is, this is a right way of giving honor and obedience to God. The church is, in some very peculiar manner, the 'portion,' and the 'called,' and the 'care' of God; and it will concern you, in pursuance of your obedience to God, to take care that they, in whose hands religion is to be ministered and conducted, be not discouraged. For what your judges are to the ministry of laws, that your bishops are in the ministries of religion; and it concerns you that the hands of neither of them be made weak: and so long as you make religion your care, and holiness your measure, you will not think that authority is the more to be despised, because it is in the hands of the church; or that it is a sin to 'speak evil of dignities,' unless they be ecclesiastical; but that they may be reviled; and that though nothing is baser than for a man to be a thief, yet sacrilege is no dishonor; and indeed, to be an oppressor is a great and crying sin, yet to oppress the church, to diminish her rents, to make her beggarly and contemptible, that is no offence; and that though it is not lawful 'to despise government,' yet if it be church government, that then the case is altered. Take heed of that; for then God is dishonored, when any thing is the more despised, by how much it relates nearer unto God. No religion ever did despise their chiefest ministers; and the Christian religion gives them the greatest honor. For honorable priesthood is like a shower from heaven, it causes blessings everywhere: but a pitiful, a disheartened, a discouraged clergy, waters the ground with a water-pot, here and there a little good, and for a little while; but every evil man can destroy all that work whenever he pleases. Take heed; in the world there is not a greater misery can happen to any man, than to be an enemy to God's church. All histories of Christendom and the whole book of God have sad records, and sad threatenings, and sad stories of Korah, and Doeg, and Balaam, and Jeroboam, and Uzzah, and Ananias and Sapphira, and Julian, and of heretics and schismatics, and sacrilegious; and, after all, these men could not prevail finally, but paid for the mischief they did, and ended their days in dishonor, and left

nothing behind them but the memory of their sin, and the record of their curse.

3. In the same proportion, you are to take care of all inferior relatives of God and of religion. Find out methods to relieve the poor, to accommodate and well dispose of the cures of souls; let not the churches lie waste and in ruinous heaps, to the diminution of religion, and the reproach of the nation; lest the nations abroad say, that the Britons are a kind of Christians that have no churches; for churches, and courts of judicature, and the public defences of an imperial city, are *res sacræ;* they are venerable in law, and honorable in religion.

But that which concerns us most is, that we all keep close to our religion. *Ad magnas reipublicæ utilitates retinetur religio in civitatibus*, said Cicero; by religion, and the strict preserving of it, ye shall best preserve the interests of the nation: and, according to the precept of the Apostle, 'Mark them which cause divisions amongst you, contrary to the doctrine that ye have received, and avoid them.'* For I beseech you to consider, all you that are true protestants; do you not think that your religion is holy, and apostolical, and taught by Christ, and pleasing unto God? If you do not think so, why do you not leave it? but if you do think so, why are ye not zealous for it? Is not the government a part of it? It is that which immures, and adorns, and conducts all the rest, and is established in the thirty-sixth article of the church, in the public service-book, and in the book of consecration: it is, therefore, a part of our religion, and is not all of it worth preserving? If it be, then they which make schisms against this doctrine, by the rule of the Apostle, are to be avoided. *Beatus qui prædicat verbum inauditum;* "Blessed is he that preaches a word that was never heard before;" so said the Spanish Jesuit: but Christ said otherwise: 'No man having drunk old wine straight desires new, for he saith the old is better.' And so it is in religion, *Quod primum verum*, "Truth is always first;" and since episcopacy hath been of so lasting an abode, of so long a blessing,

* Rom. xvi. 17.

since it hath ever combined with government, and hath been taught by that Spirit that hath so long dwelt in God's church, and hath now, according to the promise of Jesus, that says 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church,' been restored amongst us by a heap of miracles; and as it went away, so it returned again in the hand of monarchy, and in the bosom of our fundamental laws;—suffer no evil tongue to speak against this truth, which hath had so long a testimony from God, and from experience, and from the wisdom of so many ages, of all your ancestors and all your laws, lest ye be found to speak against God, and neglect the things that belong unto your peace, and get nothing by it but news and danger, and what other effects ye know not. But Leontinus, bishop of Antioch, stroked his old white beard, and said, "When this snow is dissolved, a great deal of dirty weather will follow;" meaning, that when the old religion should be questioned and discountenanced, the new religion would bring nothing but trouble and unquietness: and we have found it so by a sad experience.

4. Ye cannot obey God unless ye do justice; for this also is 'better than sacrifice,' said Solomon.* For Christ, who is 'the Sun of righteousness,' is a sun and a shield to them that do righteously. The Indian was not immured sufficiently by the Atlantic sea, nor the Bosphoran by the walls of ice, nor the Arabian by his meridian sun; the Christian justice of the Roman princes brake through all enclosures, and, by justice, set up Christ's standard, and gave to all the world a testimony how much could be done by prudence and valor, when they were conducted by the hands of justice. And now you will have a great trial of this part of your obedience to God.

For you are to give sentence in the causes of half a nation: and he had need be a wise and a good man, that divides the inheritance amongst brethren; that he may not be abused by contrary pretences,—nor biassed by the interest of friends,—nor transported with the unjust thoughts even of a just revenge,—nor allured by the opportunities of spoil,—nor turned aside by partiality in his own concerns,—nor blinded by gold, which

* Prov. xxi. 3.

puts out the eyes of wise men,—nor cozened by pretended zeal; —nor wearied with the difficulty of questions,—nor directed by a general measure in cases not measurable by it,—nor borne down by prejudice,—nor abused by resolutions taken before the cause be heard,—nor overruled by national interests. For justice ought to be the simplest thing in the world, and is to be measured by nothing but by truth and by laws, and by the decrees of princes. But whatever you do, let not the pretence of a different religion make you think it lawful to oppress any man in his just rights: for opinions are not, but laws only, and 'doing as we would be done to,' are the measures of justice: and though justice does alike to all men, Jew and Christian, Lutheran and Calvinist; yet to do right to them that are of another opinion, is the way to win them; but if you, for conscience sake, do them wrong, they will hate you and your religion.

Lastly, as 'obedience is better than sacrifice,' so God also said, 'I will have mercy, and not sacrifice;' meaning, that mercy is the best obedience. *Perierat totum quod Deus fecerat, nisi misericordia subvenisset*, said Chrysologus: "All the creatures both of heaven and earth would perish, if mercy did not relieve us all." Other good things, more or less, every man expects according to the portion of his fortune: *Ex clementia omnes idem sperant*;* but from mercy and clemency all the world alike do expect advantages. And which of us all stands here this day, that does not need God's pardon and the king's? Surely no man is so much pleased with his own innocence, as that he will be willing to quit his claim to mercy: and if we all need it, let us all show it.

> Naturæ imperio gemimus, cum funus adultæ
> Virginis occurrit, vel terra clauditur infans,
> Et minor igne rogi ———.†

"If you do but see a maiden carried to her grave a little before her intended marriage, or an infant die before the birth of reason, nature hath taught us to pay a tributary tear." Alas! your eyes will behold the ruin of many families, which,

* Seneca. † Juven. xv. 138.

though they sadly have deserved, yet mercy is not delighted with the spectacle; and therefore God places a watery cloud in the eye, that when the light of heaven shines on it, it may produce a rainbow to be a sacrament, and a memorial, that God and the sons of God do not love to see a man perish. God never rejoices 'in the death of him that dies;' and we also esteem it indecent to have music at a funeral. And as religion teaches us to pity a condemned criminal, so mercy intercedes for the most benign interpretation of the laws. You must, indeed, be as just as the laws; and you must be as merciful as your religion: and you have no way to tie these together, but to follow the pattern in the Mount; do as God does, who 'in judgment remembers mercy.'

To conclude: if every one in this honorable assembly would join together, to promote Christian religion, in its true notion, that is, peace and holiness, the love of God and the love of our brother, Christianity in all its proper usefulness, and would not endure in the nation any thing against the laws of the holy Jesus; if they were all zealous for the doctrines of righteousness, and impatient of sin, in yourselves and in the people; it is not to be imagined what a happy nation we should be. But if ye divide into parties, and keep up useless differences of names or interests; if ye do not join in the bands of peace, that is, the king and the church, religion and the good of the nation, you can never hope to see a blessing to be the end of your labors. Remember the words of Solomon,* 'Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people:' but when righteousness is advanced in the hearts and lives of the nation, who shall dare to reprove your faith? who can find fault with your religion?

God, of his mercy, grant, that in all your consultations the word of God may be your measure, the Spirit of God may be your guide, and the glory of God may be your end. He, of his mercy, grant, that moderation may be your limit, and peace may be within your walls, as long as you are there, and in all the land for ever after. But remember, that since the honor and service of his majesty, and the peace and prosperity of the

* Prov. xxiv. 34.

church; the perpetuity of our fundamental laws, public justice, and the honor of all legal authority, the advancement of trade, and the wealth of the nation, is your design;—remember, I pray, what warranty you have to expect all this; no less than the words of our blessed Saviour; but it is on these terms: 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, and all these things shall be added to you.' Amen.

END OF VOL. III.

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